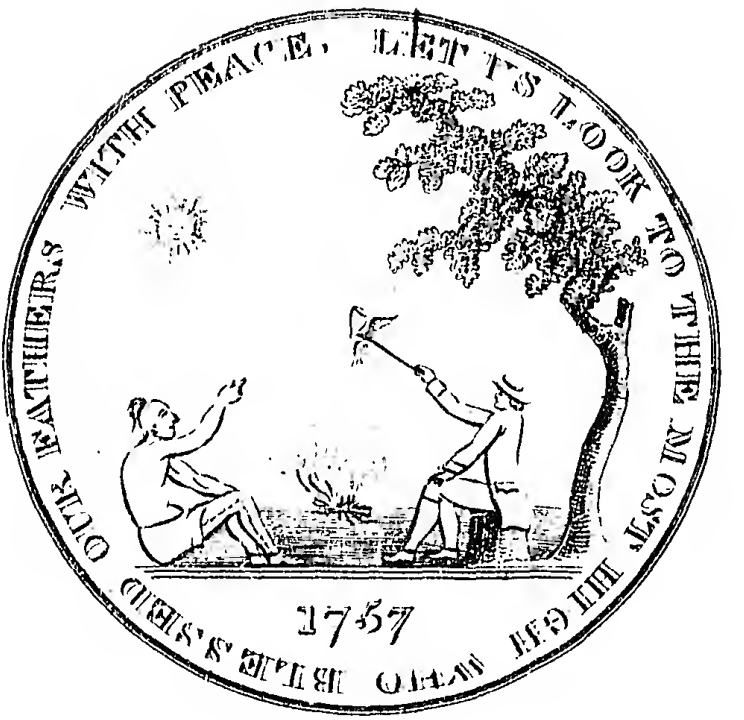
INDIAN MEDAL



This medal represents William Penn, or as the Indians call him, Brother Onas, at a Council fire offering the Calumet of Peace to an Indian Chief: & pointing, at the Sun, as characteristick both of the purity & durability of the Friendship which the Association designed to promote.

Vide P. IV.

Fac simile

Anthony Benezet

MEMOIRS

OF

THE LIFE

OF

ANTHONY BENEZET;

By ROBERTS VAUX.

"He was the offspring of humanity,
And every child of sorrow was his brother."

PHILADELPHIA PRINTED.

York:

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1817.

PREFACE

TO THE ENGLISH EDITION.

IN reprinting these interesting Memoirs, the Editor has incorporated with the text some very long notes, which he found in the original; and has also made many small corrections; but the general arrangement remains unaltered. The Editor has also added some extracts from a letter written by Anthony Benezet to John Pemberton, of which he possessed a manuscript copy.

The Author might probably conceive that his readers, on the American continent, would be conversant with the design of the Indian medal represented in the Frontispiece, and might therefore omit to explain it. As this omission would appear a considerable defect to the English reader, the Editor has obtained, from an acquaintance

who resided in Pennsylvania, at the time the medal was presented, the explanation which is subjoined to it on the plate. The origin of this medal, as given by the Author in p. 87—92, was an effort of a "Friendly Association for regaining and preserving, by pacific measures, peace with the Indians." A few medals were struck off, and distributed among the principal Indian Chiefs of several nations.

Before the Editor leaves the subject, he will state, in addition to the explanation already given, that a few years previous, about the year 1744, as stated in a letter from *Conrad Weiser*, he was sent by the Governor of Pennsylvania, to *Shamokin*, which was at that time an Indian town, on account of the untimely death, and probably the murder of one white trader or more, by the Indians.

When he had performed his errand, a feast was prepared, at which about one hundred persons

were present. After they had, to use his own words, "in great silence, devoured a fat bear," the eldest of the chiefs made a speech, in the course of which he said: "That by a great misfortune, three of their brethren, the *white men*, had been killed by an Indian; that nevertheless the *Sun was not set*, it had only been somewhat darkened by a small cloud, which was now done away; and he that had done evil was likely to be punished, and the land to remain in *peace*."

Hence we may readily infer, that during a time of actual hostility, the representation of the Sun advancing to its zenith, would be appropriate on the part of those, who were desirous of proving the ambassadors of that desirable state of tranquillity which had long been interrupted. And though, as the Editor's informant states: "Struck off in a hurry, the medal did but little credit to the ingenuity of the artist;" yet, to those rude Aborigines it would be important; for the Indians

attach much value to such means of conciliating friendship.

These observations are corroborated, by the issue of the Indian conference, already mentioned: for towards the close, the eldest chief exhorted his people to thankfulness to the Great Spirit, and thereupon began to sing with an awful solemnity, but without expressing words; the others accompanied him with their voices. After they had done, the same *Indian*, with great fervour expressed these words: "Thanks, thanks be to thee, thou Great Lord of the World, in that thou hast again caused the *Sun to shine*, and hast dispersed the dark cloud:—The Indians are thine."

York, 1817.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS,

By the AUTHOR.

WHEN this work was about to be undertaken, the writer presumed that ample materials might be procured, to render it altogether worthy of the character of Anthony Benezet. But although only thirty-two years have elapsed since his death, no traces are discernible of the mass of important and interesting documents, which must have accumulated during more than fifty of the last years of his life; devoted as it continually was, to the most benevolent labours, in relation

to many of which, he maintained an epistolary correspondence with men of celebrity in America and Europe.

If access could have been had to the stock of original papers, which were no doubt preserved by him, they would minutely and regularly have unfolded, the history of his numerous and various transactions. Instead therefore, of a finished portraiture of the life of this excellent man, the author regrets, that from the relics which have escaped an oblivion so unaccountable, he is enabled to furnish only a mere sketch of some of its features. He trusts, however, that enough is developed in the subsequent pages, justly to entitle the subject of them, to be considered as having been an *illustrious benefactor of the human race.*

And although Anthony Benezet never sought to have awarded to him by the world, an appellation so dignified, the record of evidence which establishes his claim to it, may serve to awaken desires in the mind of the reader, to pursue the footsteps of this humble philanthropist, in the hope of obtaining, like him, *the imperishable reward, which is dispensed in Heaven.*

Birwood Lodge, Eighth Month, 1816.

List of Authorities, from which this Work is composed.

Dr. Rush's Essays.

American Museum, volume IX.

Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

Poetical Epistle to the enslaved Africans.

New and General Biographical Dictionary.

Memorials, issued by the Religious Society of Friends.

Manuscript Memorandums, by Anthony Benezet, presented to the late pious and venerable John Parrish, furnished by his nephew Dr. Parrish.

Manuscript Book that belonged to Anthony Benezet, in possession of Joseph Clark.

Several publications by Anthony Benezet.

Hardie's Biography.

Minutes, and other papers relating to the Friendly Association for regaining and preserving peace with the Indians by pacific measures, supplied by James Pemberton Parke.

Manuscript Letters of Anthony Benezet, and oral information communicated by individuals who were personally acquainted with him.

Power of Religion on the Mind, by Lindley Murray.

Minot, volume I. chapter 10.

Universal History, volume XL. page 201.

British Empire, volume I. page 208, 211.

Smollett's England, volume I. page 252, 253.

Penn's Works.

MEMOIRS, &c.

IT is not among the least interesting facts, connected with the virtues and services of the subject of this Memoir, that he was descended from an ancient and respectable family. His progenitors, through many generations, acquired and sustained an honourable reputation, by devotion to conscientious principles.

The most remote maternal ancestor to whom reference can be had, was Armand Crommelin. He lived in the fifteenth century, and suffered so severely for his religious opinions, by the persecutions of that period, as to be induced to retire from his native place in Holland, and take up his abode at Courteray, a town of the Austrian Netherlands. Of the numerous descendants from Crommelin, one of them, of the fifth generation, was married to John Benezet, of Clavison in Languedoc, whose life terminated in the year 1690. He left seven children, the eldest of whom, John Stephen, was the father of the philanthropist.

An ancient family record, which has survived the vicissitudes of more than a century, exhibits evidence of the religious character of the paternal predecessors of Anthony Benezet. The nativities, marriages, and deaths noted in it, are uniformly accompanied with sentiments of piety. Connected with the register of his grandfather's demise, the event is said to be "*to the great affliction of his children, and the universal regret of his relations and friends; for he was a model of virtue and purity, and lived in the constant fear of God.*" Attached to the birth note of his grandson Anthony, the Divine favour is thus implored for the infant's preservation and happiness: "*May God bless him, in making him a partaker of his mercies.*" Though virtue is not hereditary, it must be admitted that example is powerful.

ANTHONY BENEZET was born at St. Quintin, in France, on the thirty-first day of the Eleventh Month, (January,) Anno Domini 1713, O.S. His parents were among the most noted and wealthy persons of that time. On the revocation of the edict of Nantz, they associated themselves with those protestants who had been contemptuously denominated Huguenots, and who became obnoxious

to the unparalleled fury of Romish bigotry during the reign of Lewis XIV. John Stephen Benezet suffered as severely as any of his ancestors for a faithful attachment to his religious opinions. His estate, on this account, was confiscated in 1715; when he withdrew from his native country, and sought refuge in Holland.

At this time his son Anthony was an infant, a circumstance which no doubt greatly increased the solicitude of his parents, whose afflictions must have been almost insupportable, and whose flight was extremely perilous. It was natural for the protector of a family, situated as he was, to resort to such means as might give hope of success to the hazardous enterprise which the urgent necessity of exile had dictated: so great an exigency probably reconciled to the mind of this suffering individual, the method he adopted to effect it; though it offered a serious alternative, which was to sacrifice either the life or the fidelity of the servant of the crown.

To accomplish this purpose, he secured the services of a young man, upon whose attachment he could rely, to accompany him beyond one of the military outposts, which then skirted the

frontier of France. Nothing occurred to interrupt their progress, until they approached the centinel; when their adventurous friend presenting himself before him, displaying in one hand an instrument of death, and tendering with the other a purse of money, said: "*Take your choice; this is a worthy family, flying from persecution, and they shall pass.*" The guard accepted the gold, and their escape was safely accomplished.

They remained a few months in Rotterdam, and thence removed to London, where they resided sixteen years; during which time John Stephen Benezet, being engaged in commercial pursuits, was enabled to recover, in some degree, the losses he had sustained in his fortune. Whilst in Great Britain, Anthony received an education that was deemed sufficient to qualify him for mercantile business; to acquire a knowledge of which, his father placed him with one of the most respectable traders of the metropolis. In this situation he did not long continue, declining, from motives of a religious nature, to be occupied in the enterprises of commerce. Having chosen a mechanical business, he engaged himself with a cooper; but it proved to be an employment too laborious for his youthful and naturally delicate frame.

Of his juvenile habits and dispositions, but an imperfect account is preserved; it is only known that when about fourteen years old, he was united in membership with the religious society of Friends, called Quakers. Whether the early developement of his mind, yielded any promise of the future excellence of his character, no evidence now remains. In the year 1731, at the age of eighteen, he came with his parents to Philadelphia, where the family was permanently established. His pursuits during the first five years after his emigration to Pennsylvania, cannot be ascertained.

In 1736 he formed a matrimonial union with Joyce Marriott, a woman of exemplary piety. Three years after his marriage he removed to Wilmington, in the state of Delaware, and was there engaged in a branch of manufacture, which neither answering his expectation, nor suiting the disposition of his mind, he was induced to return in a few months to Philadelphia.

The unsettled state in which he appears to have been at this period, in relation to his secular occupations, may be attributed to the operation

of those benevolent principles of his nature which had not hitherto been brought into complete action, as well as to the desire he cherished, that the energies of his mind might be directed to the most useful and salutary purposes. Thus, at an age when the generality of mankind are most concerned, to determine in what manner they shall apply their time and talents, for their own aggrandisement, and are seen eagerly grasping for wealth, or panting for those honours and that fame which the world can bestow, Anthony Benezet exhibits the rare example of a man, subjecting every selfish and ambitious passion, to the superior obligations of religion; offering himself a candidate for any service which might contribute to promote his Creator's honour, and advance the happiness of his fellow beings.

Such extraordinary devotion of heart could not fail to be preparatory, to the luxuriant growth of all those tender charities, those exalted virtues, and that distinguished humility, which made up the plenteous, and rich harvest of his life.

In the twenty-sixth year of his age, he believed it to be most consistent with his duty, to under-

take the instruction of youth in useful learning; and his first engagement in that capacity was at Germantown, in the vicinity of Philadelphia: whilst at that place, he also employed a portion of his time as a proof reader for a printer, near whom he lived. In 1742, a vacancy occurred in the English department of the public school, founded by charter from William Penn; an institution under the superintendence of some of the most eminent, pious, and learned men that adorned the religious and civil community of Philadelphia. By their solicitation and encouragement, he left Germantown, and accepted the office of a teacher in that seminary; in which station he continued for twelve years, to the entire satisfaction of his employers.

In 1755, he established a school on his own account, for the instruction of females; and soon found himself entrusted with the education of the daughters of the most affluent and respectable inhabitants of the city. To his amiable and interesting pupils, he was endeared by the exercise of an uncommon degree of religious care; and such was the urbanity of his manners, and the lenity of his government, that the cha-

racter of the tutor was lost, in an indulgence more unlimited than even parental fondness is apt to dispense. This mode of treatment, produced a correspondent respect and regard from his scholars, in whose hearts was deeply implanted the strongest attachment to their preceptor and friend, which, in those who have descended to the grave, was extinguished only with their lives; and that still glowing in the bosoms of the few who survive, can cease only with the termination of all human affections. As an instructor of youth, as well as in every other engagement of life, he appears to have reflected and determined for himself, on the principles which were to control his conduct.

It is not therefore surprising that he should have adopted a system of government, unlike that which was then exercised by those who were entrusted with the education of children. The discipline of schools, at the time when Benezet began a reformation, was of all systems the most repugnant to the plain distates of nature, reason, and Christianity. The individual who was to mould the mind of a child, lead it to the knowledge of its own energies, instil into it radical

principles, and, in short, essentially contribute to form the character, could not better display his qualifications for this purpose, nor secure more certain, though misapplied patronage and confidence, than by the assumption of a demeanour, at once supercilious and pedantic. To complete his attributes, the teacher ruled his subjects by the exercise of punishments, as cruel and vindictive, as might entirely comport with the despotic office he sustained.

The discerning and conscientious mind of Benezet, perceived the injurious tendency of a system thus organised; he saw its operation was calculated to produce in the minds of those who were obnoxious to its influence, dispositions the most unhappy; whilst it must inevitably lessen the ability, if not altogether frustrate the design of communicating information to youth. With Lord Bacon, he was convinced, that what is learned willingly, and at the proper season, makes the deepest impression; and that much depends on the manner of conveying lessons of instruction to the juvenile understanding.

The plan which Benezet pursued was therefore that of mildness. He investigated the natural dispositions of his pupils, and adapted his management of them, to their various tempers. Persuasion would secure attention and obedience in some, whilst proper excitement to emulation, would animate and encourage others. The sense of shame, and the fear of disgrace, could be roused in the minds of those, whose stubbornness the less acute remedies would not affect; and it is affirmed, that he rarely had recourse to corporal punishment, and seldom permitted an angry passion to be exhibited to his scholars.

His patient and persevering temper was remarkably displayed, in the attention he bestowed upon a female who was deaf and dumb. She acquired, during two years under his tuition, such instruction as enabled her to enjoy an intercourse with society, which had been previously denied to her. And although his efforts in this case, to organise and develope ideas, did not reach the perfection since attained in the admirable scheme of his celebrated countryman the Abbé L'Apée, he nevertheless deserves credit for an attempt, which, in point of originality in Philadelphia, (perhaps in America,) must be awarded to him.

When not immediately engaged in their studies, he was on the most social terms with his pupils, and regularly assigned a portion of the time usually allotted for business, to indulging them with suitable recreation and amusement, in an apartment which he had expressly constructed for the purpose. So deeply was his mind interested in what he deemed the judicious education of youth, that for the promotion of his opinions and views, he compiled two introductory books for the use of schools. His reasons for engaging in this work, as well as his sentiments on the general subject of instruction, are given in the following letters to David Barclay of London, and John Pemberton of Philadelphia.

Philad hia, 1782.

"Esteemed Friend, DAVID BARCLAY,

"A good opportunity offering by our friend John Pemberton, I make use of it, affectionately to salute and inform thee, that I have with much satisfaction understood, that the necessary and pious education of the youth, has more particularly become the object of the notice of Friends and

that thou hast been engaged to interest thyself in this important work.

"In the course of my concern for the proper instruction and best welfare of the youth, in which I have been employed now for near forty years, I have found a great disadvantage arising from the want of a spelling book and primer, properly adapted, not only to bring children and youth forward in reading, but also to inculcate proper principles in them. This led me to procure all the books of this kind I could meet with; and though I found more or less good matter in them all, yet none answering my prospect, I found myself engaged to endeavour the compilation of a book of this kind. Before publication I laid my essay before the overseers of our public school, who appointed James Pemberton, Nicholas Waln and others, a committee to review my manuscript, making proper amendments.

"The first edition being sold, a second of a larger sort, with improvements on the first, has been made; of this I send thee a copy, also a primer, or first book, on the same plan, to save the charges of the spelling book, which young

children are apt to deface before they have been taught many pages in it. The tendency of this kind of books is, too generally, little regarded by parents or tutors, provided there be what is judged sufficient of spelling and other common place instruction; but my view went farther; not only to make the spelling more easy, familiar and agreeable than is usual, but also to cause the bent and aim of all the lessons, from the beginning to the end, to be such as tended to mend the heart, (the great work of Christianity,) as well as convince the judgment, by raising in the tender mind, principles of compassion and tenderness, as well to the brute creation, as to their fellow men; a nobility of mind, and a love of virtue; and so on gradually, rising higher and higher, till the language and precepts, both in matter and language, are such as our best authors afforded.

"In the first edition I deviated from the common established rules in the division of syllables, rather consulting and favouring the ear, than keeping to the common custom; but some of the schoolmasters complaining that they were thereby brought under difficulty, as both they and their

scholars had been habituated to the common mode of dividing syllables, I thought it best in the second edition to give up any attempt of that kind, and make use of the same mode of spelling as was in Dilworth. The custom of making up the first lessons of all the words of one syllable I deviated from, experience having taught me, that it is much easier to introduce children to reading, by using the easiest words of two, and even three syllables, such as ac-ti-on, &c. than hard words of one syllable as draught, &c.

"I have added a short essay on grammar, compiled with great care, in order to make the grounds of that necessary foundation of knowledge in our mother tongue, more clear and easy than the compilations of that kind generally are, most of which, by introducing parts of the Latin grammar, that are of no use in our language, run into many useless words, and are difficult to be understood, both by pupils and tutors of dull capacities.

"This essay, though short, will I believe be found sufficient to give them such a general idea of English grammar, as to understand the reason of what

is proposed, and to express themselves with a good degree of correctness, where they have no other help, as well as fit them for understanding such larger works as may fall in their way.

"I should be well pleased to understand thou and other Friends, would so far co-operate with my concern, which indeed is weighty with me, as to give this spelling book a serious perusal; and if it should meet with approbation, it might be republished with such amendments and additions as may appear necessary. I trust this desire does not arise from any part I have had in it, but from a persuasion founded on long experience, and the evidence of others, that this book, or one of the same kind, may be of special service, not only in making the instruction of children more easy, but in necessarily laying before both tutors, pupils and others, where it may come, such leading principles on matters of the greatest weight, as may be instructive and edifying to them.

"The advantage of endeavouring to promote the education of our youth, on its right basis, viz. a true estimate of human life, and the amendment of the heart, whence obedience and love to

God, benignity to men, and a tender regard for the whole creation would necessarily flow, must be obvious to every feeling mind; as also giving them as easy and compendious a knowledge of their own language, and such other useful parts of learning, as their respective situations may make necessary, to answer all the good purposes of life.

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

Philadelphia, Fifth Month, 29th, 1783.

"Dear Friend, JOHN PEMBERTON,

* * * * * * * * * * "With respect to the education of our youth, I would propose, as the fruit of forty years experience, that when they are proficients in the use of their pen, and become sufficiently acquainted with the English grammar, and the useful parts of Arithmetic, they should be taught mensuration of superficies and solids; as it helps the mind in many necessary matters, particularly the use of the scale and compass; and will open the way for those parts of the mathematics, which their peculiar situations may afterwards make necessary.

"It would also be profitable for every scholar, of both sexes, to go through and understand a short but very plain set of merchants' accounts in single entry, particularly adapted to the civil uses of life. And in order to perfect their education in a useful and agreeable way, both to themselves and others, I would propose to give them a general knowledge of the mechanical powers, geography, and the elements of astronomy: the use of the microscope might also be profitably added, in discovering the minute parts of the creation. This, with the knowledge of the magnitude and courses of those mighty bodies which surround us, would tend to exalt their ideas.

"Such parts of history as may tend to give them a right idea of the corruption of the human heart, the dreadful nature and effects of war, the advantage of virtue, &c. are also necessary parts of an education founded upon Christian and reasonable principles.

"These several instructions should be inculcated on a religious plan, in such a way as may prove a delightful, rather than a painful labour, both to teachers and pupils.

"It might also be profitable to give lads of bright genius some plain lectures upon anatomy, the wondrous frame of man, deducing therefrom the advantage of a plain, simple way of life; enforcing upon their understanding, the kind efforts of nature to maintain the human frame in a state of health with little medical help, but what abstinence and exercise will afford. These necessary parts of knowledge, so useful in directing the youthful mind, in the path of virtue and wisdom, might be proposed by way of lectures, which the pupil should write down, and, when corrected, should copy in a neat bound book, to be kept for future perusal. * * * * * * * *"

Such were the motives which influenced the conduct of this excellent man, in an occupation which was pursued for subsistence; affording the bright example too seldom imitated, of making worldly concerns subservient to the noblest duties, and the most extensive goodness. If an estimate of his worth were to be formed, by a reference to the services which he rendered as an instructer of youth, they would be found to have

entitled him to the distinguished consideration, respect and gratitude of future generations. But this appropriation of his time, forms only one of the numerous engagements of his benevolent and laborious life. He looked upon the globe as his country, and considered all mankind as his brethren.

With such enlightened and unbounded philanthropy, it was to be expected, that the degraded and suffering condition of the negroes, would occupy a large share of his notice and sympathy. About the year 1750, it began to be observed that his feelings were deeply affected with the iniquity of the slave trade, the unlawfulness of carrying negroes into captivity, and the cruelty which was exercised by those who purchased and employed them. The impulses of duty, then for the first time, brought him from the retirement of private life before the world, to lift up his voice in behalf of an oppressed and wretched portion of his fellow beings. Perhaps no man in any age, or in any country, could have been better adapted to the great office of an advocate for the violated rights of a people, than was Anthony Benezet, by his peculiar capacity for being pro-

foundly sensible of their wrongs. And when the astonishing effects of his labours in this work of mercy are reviewed, no doubt can rest upon the mind, that his commission to "*plead the cause of the oppressed,*" proceeded from on high.

Among the earliest proofs of his compassion toward the African race, were the practical exertions which he employed for the promotion of their welfare. In Philadelphia, the number of these objects of his regard was considerable, and he adopted the most rational course which could have been devised for their benefit, by the establishment of an evening school, which he taught gratuitously himself.* And when a more enlarged plan of this nature was determined upon, by his brethren in religious profession, he contributed liberally from his own limited income, and was indefatigable in soliciting donations from his opulent fellow members, in aid of a fund for the erection of a building, to accommodate

* Dr. Wilson, late rector of St. Stephens, Walbrook, England, a short time before his decease, sent fifty pounds sterling to him, to be applied to the support of this school, intending to have doubled the benefaction; but he died before he effected his benevolent purpose.

a school for the instruction of black people, and toward its support.

In this charitable work he was successful beyond his own expectation, for the proficiency of his pupils in the rudiments of learning, added to the moral and religious advancement of many of them under his pious care, powerfully contributed to recommend their race to the notice, and the cause of their sufferings to the investigation of many persons of influence, who had previously held both in contempt.

Among other important facts concerning the dispositions and mental capacities of the negroes, which his intercourse with them as a teacher, had afforded him the best opportunity to establish, was, that they possessed intellectual powers by no means inferior to any other portion of mankind. His opinion on this interesting point is entitled to the highest consideration, not only because it vindicates those attributes of the Deity, which religion and reason conspire reverently to acknowledge; but being a determination of the judgment upon practical examination, it ought to be regarded, as a solemn and unanswerable pro-

test against the subtle sophistry, the degrading avarice, and refined cruelty, by whose unholy league attempts have been made to prove, that a sable skin cannot envelope a rational creature!

"*I can* (said Benezet) *with truth and sincerity declare, that I have found amongst the negroes as great variety of talents, as among a like number of whites; and I am bold to assert, that the notion entertained by some, that the blacks are inferior in their capacities, is a vulgar prejudice, founded on the pride or ignorance of their lordly masters; who have kept their slaves at such a distance, as to be unable to form a right judgment of them.*"

Having thus judiciously awakened observation and reflection in Philadelphia, and in some measure removed the unjustifiable prejudices which were entertained against the negroes, he was prepared to make an appeal, on their behalf, to the justice and clemency of communities and nations. His first attempts to enlighten the public mind, were made by composing and circulating, through the medium of almanacks and the newspapers of the day, detached pieces concerning the

unlawfulness of slavery; after which he also wrote and published several essays on the subject of the slave trade; representing in a forcible and affecting manner, the crimes which it occasioned, the miseries which it inflicted, and the awful consequences it must inevitably produce.

The largest and most important works, in this department of his literary labours, were entitled,

First. "*An account of that part of Africa inhabited by the negroes.*" 1762.

Second. "*A caution and warning to Great Britain and her colonies, on the calamitous state of the enslaved negroes.*" 1767.

Third. "*An historical account of Guinea, its situation, produce, and the general disposition of its inhabitants; with an inquiry into the rise and progress of the slave trade, its nature and calamitous effects.*"

These were printed at his own expence, and the following is a circular letter which accompanied the distribution of his books. It is thus

noticed by him in the manuscript volume from which it is extracted.

"Copy of the substance of a letter written to several persons of note, both in Europe and America, on sending them some of the negroe pamphlets, viz. account of Africa, &c. particularly to the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, *dated about the year* 1758, *and since.*"

"With the best respects I am capable of, and from, I trust, no other motive than that of love to mankind; and from a persuasion of thy sincere desires for the suppression of evil and the promotion of that righteousness which alone exalteth a nation, I make bold affectionately to salute thee, and to request a little of thy attention to a subject which has long been matter of deep concern to many, vast many, well disposed people of all denominations in these parts, viz. that of the negroe trade, the purchase and bringing of the poor negroes from their native land, and subjecting them to a state of perpetual bondage, the most cruel and oppressive; in which the English nation is so deeply engaged, and which, with additional sorrow, we observe to be greatly

increasing in their northern colonies, and likely still more to increase, by the acquisition the English have lately made of the factories on the river Senegal.

"I herewith send thee some small treatises lately published here on that subject, wherein are truly set forth the great inhumanity and wickedness which this trade gives life to, whereby hundreds of thousands of our fellow creatures, equally with us the objects of Christ's redeeming grace, and as free as we are by nature, are kept under the worst oppression, and many of them yearly brought to a miserable and untimely end.

"I make bold earnestly to entreat, that thou wouldst be pleased seriously to read them, when I doubt not thou wilt perceive it to be a matter which calls for the most deep consideration, of all who are concerned for the civil, as well as religious welfare of their country, and who are desirous to avert those judgments, which evils of such a dye must necessarily, sooner or later, bring upon every people who are defiled therewith, and will, I trust, plead my excuse for the freedom I take in thus addressing myself to thee.

"How an evil of so deep a dye, has so long, not only passed unnoticed, but has even had the countenance of the government, and been supported by law, is surprising: it must be because many worthy men in power, both of the laity and clergy, have been unacquainted with the horrible wickedness with which the trade is carried on, the corrupt motives which give life to it, and the groans, the numberless dying groans, which daily ascend to God, the common father of mankind, from the broken hearts of those our deeply oppressed fellow creatures.

ANTHONY BENEZET."

The circulation of his writings among men of eminence in different parts of the world, was productive of the happiest effects, by exciting them to a consideration of the outrages and corruptions, attendant on the slave trade and slavery. It was the means also, of introducing him and the knowledge of his exertions, to some of the most efficient philanthropists in Europe and America, whose kindred minds were soon pre-

pared to unite in the mighty struggle, for ridding both hemispheres of such a pollution.

The influence of his account of Guinea, in giving an impulse to the mind of the indefatigable and benevolent Thomas Clarkson, whose exertions contributed so much toward bringing about the abolition of the slave trade, by the British Parliament, is certainly remarkable. In the year 1785, Dr. Peckard, vice-chancellor of the university of Cambridge, proposed the following question for a Latin dissertation, to the senior bachelors of arts, of whom Clarkson was one, viz.: *Anne liceat invitos in servitutem dare?** Having in the former year gained a prize for the best Latin dissertation, he resolved to endeavour to maintain the classical reputation he had acquired, by applying himself to the subject; but it was one with which he was by no means familiar, and he was at a loss what authors to consult respecting it, "*when going by accident,*" says he, "*into a friend's house, I took up a newspaper, then lying on the table; one of the articles which attracted my notice, was an advertisement of Anthony Benezet's historical*

* Is it right to make slaves of others against their will?

*account of Guinea. I soon left my friend and his paper, and to lose no time, hastened to London to buy it. In this precious book I found almost all I wanted."**

The information furnished by Benezet's book encouraged him to complete his essay, which was rewarded with the first prize; and from that moment Clarkson's mind became interested with the great subject of the abolition!

Notwithstanding the governments of the United States and Great Britain, have now by law forbidden the commerce in human beings, there is cause for believing that the slave trade is still surreptitiously carried on by some of the citizens of both countries, under cover of foreign flags. When we reflect upon such violations of civil and sacred prohibition, and are at the same moment aware that the horrid practice of kidnapping free negroes, is pursued in some of the states of our union, and also recollect, that *more than a million of slaves* are owned within its jurisdiction, famed as is the empire of the west for rational liberty

* Vide Clarkson's history of the abolition of the slave trade.

and equal laws, the understanding revolts, and the feeling mind sickens at the consideration.

As the subject of this memoir travelled forward, with steady and unwearying step, in this momentous concern, his mind became so thoroughly absorbed with the intricate and various relations and views which it involved, as to induce him to give up his school, in the year 1766, and remove to the city of Burlington, in New Jersey; where he might more entirely apply himself to that and other objects, intended to promote the best interests of his fellow creatures As may be supposed, he availed himself of all the advantages which this retirement afforded; but the situation was one not altogether suited to his active disposition; and in the succeeding year he returned to Philadelphia, and resumed his former employment of school keeping.

With the progress of life, his zeal and assiduity for effecting the abolition of the slave trade, increased. No exertion was too great, nor any service too minute for him to undertake, if he supposed it might advance the righteous cause of justice and mercy. Consequently, it was charac-

teristic, if on one day he was seen surrounded by the sable children of Africa, imparting advice, and deriving information from them concerning the cruelties they had suffered; and the next was engaged in composing essays on the subject; addressing letters to friends and strangers, from whom he hoped some aid could be obtained; or with an innocent boldness, worthy of his office, was spreading the cause of the poor negroe, in the language of warning and persuasion, before statesmen and sovereigns.

The following letters will develope some of his opinions relative to the traffic in human flesh, and the means he employed to promote its overthrow, as well as the notice which was taken of his efforts.

Philadelphia, Fourth Month, 28th, 1773.

"DOCTOR JOHN FOTHERGILL,

"Thy kind letter of the twenty-eighth of Eighth Month last, I received in due time, and gratefully acknowledge thy kind sympathy therein expressed. I am likeminded with thee, with respect to the

danger and difficulty which would attend a sudden manumission of those negroes now in the southern colonies, as well to themselves, as to the whites; wherefore, except in particular cases, the obtaining of their freedom, and indeed the freedom of many even amongst us, is by no means the present object of my concern. But the best endeavours in our power, to draw the notice of governments, upon the grievous iniquity and great danger attendant on a further prosecution of the slave trade, is what every truly sympathising mind cannot but earnestly desire, and under Divine direction promote to the utmost of their power.

"If this could be obtained, I trust the sufferings of those already amongst us, by the interposition of the government, and even from selfish ends in their masters, would be mitigated; and, in time, Providence would gradually work for the release of those, whose age and situation would fit them for freedom. The settlements now in prospect to be made in that large extent of country, from the west side of the Allegany mountains to the Mississippi, on a breadth of four or five hundred miles, would afford a suita-

ble and beneficial means of settlement for many of them among the white people, which would, in all probability, be as profitable to the negroes as to the new settlers. But I do not desire to take up thy time, especially with matters of so remote a nature, it being indeed with reluctance I take up any of it; which I would have avoided, was there any person to whom I could have addressed myself with the same expectation, that what I have in view would be thereby answered.

"An address has been presented to our assembly, desiring it would use its utmost endeavours with the king and parliament, that an end may be put to the slave trade, by laying a duty of twenty pounds each on all slaves imported. It was thought necessary that some friends with you, should be acquainted with the further steps that had been, or were likely to be taken, so as to enable you to speak in support of the law, if necessary: to which end I herewith send thee a copy of the address, also a copy of what I now write to our agent, Benjamin Franklin, on that head, in order to make him acquainted with what passes here on this momentous concern.

"I have also enclosed a number of copies of a pamphlet written at the time we presented the petition, in order to lay the weight of the matter briefly before the members of the assembly, and other active members of government, in this and the neighbouring provinces. It was written by Benjamin Rush, a young physician of the Presbyterian communion, a person whom, I understand, thou wast acquainted with, when pursuing his studies three or four years past with you. I also send a small collection of religious tracts, chiefly compiled for the use of inquiring people in our back countries, where such books are much wanted. I endeavoured so to collect them, as to be plain, instructive, and edifying, without touching upon that which might be occasion of fruitless debate.

ANTHONY BENEZET."

Philadelphia, Fourth Month, 1773.

"GRANVILLE SHARP,

"I wrote thee at large, by a vessel for Ireland, about six weeks past, and also three weeks ago by the packet from New York, respecting the

steps taken, and likely to be pursued, in the several more northern provinces, in relation to the slave trade. I am glad to understand from my friend Benjamin Franklin, that you have commenced an acquaintance, and that he expects in future, to act in concert with thee in the affair of slavery. I herewith send thee some pamphlets; and in a confidence of thy goodness of heart, which by looking to the intention, will construe the freedom I have taken in the best light,

I remain with love,

ANTHONY BENEZET."

Philadelphia, Seventh Month, 16th, 1781.

"My Friend ABBE RAYNAL,

"From the idea which I conceived of the justice and generosity of thy sentiments, I took the liberty of writing to thee, about seven or eight months past, under cover of my friend Benjamin Franklin, and likewise by J—— B——, who, we are afraid, was lost on his passage. Having received no answer by several vessels, nor knowing whether my letters reached thee, or whether

thine miscarried, and a good opportunity offering by my friend Dr. Griffiths, I now seize it to send thee two copies of a small extract of origin and principles of my brethren the Quakers, whom, I observe in such of thy writings as have come to our hands, thou didst not think unworthy of thy attention.

"I have nothing to add to what I have already written thee; but shall repeat my wish of saluting thee affectionately, on the principles of reason and humanity, which constitute that grand circle of love and charity, not confined by our parentage or country, but which affectionately embraces the whole creation; earnestly desiring, to the utmost of *my abilities, to promote the happiness of all men, even of my enemies themselves, could I have any.* I beseech God to give thee strength that thou mayest continue to hold up to mankind, thy brethren, principles tending to replenish their hearts with goodness, friendship, and charity, towards each other, that thus thou mayest, to the utmost of thy power, render men reasonable, useful, and consequently happy; and more especially that thou mayest combat that false principle of honour, or rather of intolerable pride and folly,

which so strongly prevails in our nation, where the most indolent, and the least useful, fancy themselves, and are reputed the most noble. Let us endeavour to make them sensible that men are noble, only in an exact proportion with their being rational.

" The happiness which is to be found in virtue alone, is sought for by men through the titles acquired by their fathers, for their activity in those wars which have desolated the world, or in the wealth accumulated by their ancestors; both means generally unjust and oppressive, and consequently rather sources of shame and humiliation. For as the Chinese philosopher well observes, ' *There is scarcely one rich man out of a hundred, who was not himself an oppressor, or the son of an oppressor.*'

" Let us display to princes, and the rulers of nations, the example of Numa Pompilius, who, by a conduct opposite to that of Romulus, his predecessor, and most of his successors, rendered the Romans, during his long reign, so respectable and happy. Above all, my dear friend, let us represent to our compatriots, the abominable ini-

quity of the Guinea trade. Let us put to the blush the pretended disciples of the benign Saviour of the world, for the encouragement given to the unhappy Africans, in invading the liberty of their own brethren. Let us rise, and rise with energy, against the corruption introduced into the principles and manners of the masters and owners of slaves, by a conduct so contrary to humanity, reason, and religion. Let us be still more vehement in representing its baneful influence on the principles and manners of their wretched offspring, necessarily educated in idleness, pride, and all the vices to which human nature is liable.

"How desirable is it that Louis the Sixteenth, whose virtues, and good disposition have been so nobly praised, would set an example to the other potentates of Europe, by forbidding his subjects to be concerned in a traffic, so evil in itself, and so corrupting in its consequences; and that he would also issue out ordinances in favour of such of the negroes, as are now slaves in his dominions. Alas! should Christianity, that law of love and charity, work its proper effect on the hearts of its pretended disciples, we should see

numbers of Christians traverse Africa and both the Indies, not to pollute themselves with slavery and slaughter, nor to accumulate wealth, the supreme wish of the present nominal Christians; but that Divine love would impel them to visit remote regions, in order to make the inhabitants acquainted with the corruption of the human heart, and invite them to seek for the influence of that grace proposed by the gospel, by which they may obtain salvation. I am under the necessity of concluding hastily, requesting thou wouldst excuse faults, which time does not allow me to correct, and write to me by various opportunities, the vessels bound to these parts often missing their destination.

I am affectionately thy friend,

ANTHONY BENEZET."

To this energetic and impassioned epistle, the abbé made the following answer.

Bruxelles, December 26, 1781.

" All your letters have miscarried; happily I received that of the sixteenth of July, 1781, with

the pamphlets filled with light and sensibility, which accompany it. Never was any present more agreeable to me. My satisfaction was equal to the respect I have always had for the society of the Quakers. May it please Heaven to cause all nations to adopt their principles; men would then be happy, and the globe not stained with blood. Let us join in our supplications to the Supreme Being, that He may unite us in the bonds of a tender and unalterable charity.

I am, &c.

RAYNAL."

About two years after the reply which Anthony Benezet received from the Abbé Raynal, he addressed the following letter,

"To CHARLOTTE, *Queen of Great Britain.*

"Impressed with a sense of religious duty, and encouraged by the opinion generally entertained, of thy benevolent disposition to succour the distressed, I take the liberty, very respectfully, to offer to thy perusal some tracts, which I believe faithfully describe the suffering condition of ma-

ny hundred thousands of our fellow creatures, of the African race; great numbers of whom, rent from every tender connexion in life, are annually taken from their native land, to endure, in the American islands and plantations, a most rigorous and cruel slavery; whereby many, very many of them, are brought to a melancholy and untimely end.

"When it is considered, that the inhabitants of Britain, who are themselves so eminently blessed in the enjoyment of religious and civil liberty, have long been, and yet are, very deeply concerned in this flagrant violation of the common rights of mankind, and that even its national authority is exerted in support of the African slave trade, there is much reason to apprehend that this has been, and as long as the evil exists, will continue to be, an occasion of drawing down the Divine displeasure on the nation and its dependencies.

"May these considerations induce thee to interpose thy kind endeavours, on behalf of this greatly oppressed people, whose abject situation gives them an additional claim to the pity and

assistance of the generous mind; inasmuch as they are altogether deprived of the means of soliciting effectual relief for themselves; that so thou mayst not only be a blessed instrument in the hand of Him, "*by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice,*" to avert the awful judgments by which the empire has already been so remarkably shaken; but that the blessings of thousands ready to perish may come upon thee, at a time when the superior advantages attendant on thy situation in this world, will no longer be of any avail to thy consolation and support.

"To the tracts on the subject to which I have thus ventured to crave thy particular attention, I have added some others, which, at different times, I have believed it my duty to publish, and which I trust will afford thee some satisfaction; their design being for the furtherance of that universal peace, and good will amongst men, which the gospel was intended to introduce.

"I hope thou wilt kindly excuse the freedom used on this occasion, by an ancient man, whose mind, for more than forty years past, has been much separated from the common course of the

world, and long painfully exercised in the consideration of the miseries, under which so large a part of mankind, equally with us the objects of redeeming love, are suffering the most unjust and grievous oppression, and who sincerely desires the temporal, and eternal felicity of the queen and her royal consort.

ANTHONY BENEZET."

Philadelphia, Eighth Month, 25th, 1783.

After having perused this pathetic epistle, the queen is said to have remarked, "*That the writer was truly a good man, and that she kindly accepted the present,*" engaging also to read the books.

He made communications on the subject of the slave trade, to the queens of France and Portugal, and likewise to the countess of Huntingdon. The latter having founded a college for the education of indigent orphans near Savannah, in Georgia, the managers of it employed slaves for the cultivation of the lands, with which

she had liberally endowed the Institution. His appeal to that benevolent female was successful; for the countess assured him in reply to his address: "*That such a measure should never have her countenance, and that she would take care to prevent it.*"

He corresponded with George Whitfield; and the fragments of letters which follow, show that he also wrote to the persons who thus respectfully reply to his letters.

From GOVERNOR LIVINGSTON, of New Jersey.

"The piece on slave keeping is excellent, but the arguments against the unlawfulness of war, have been answered a thousand times. May the Father of Lights lead us into all truth, and over all the commotions of this world, to his own glory, and the introduction of that kingdom of peace and righteousness, which will endure for ever. Believe me to be your sincere friend."

From AMBROSE SERLE, Secretary to Lord Howe.

Philadelphia, June 2d, 1778.

"I ought not to omit, my valued friend, the returning you my kindest thanks, for your obliging

present of books, which I shall peruse with attention, and for your sake keep them by me. It would be happy for the world at large, and for individuals, if the principles they maintain were rightly understood and cordially received. We should, in that case, have had no occasion to deplore the present miseries and troubles, which, as the certain effect of sin, naturally result from the ambition, dishonesty and other unmortified passions of mankind. The world on the contrary would be something like a paradise regained; and universal benevolence and philanthropy, preside as they ought in the human heart.

"But though, from long experience, we may and must despair of the general diffusion of Christian sentiments and practice, we have this comfortable trust, in our own particular persons, that we have a peace which the world can neither give nor take away; and though the kingdoms of this world tumble into confusion, and are lost in the corrupted strivings of men, we have a kingdom prepared of God, incorruptible and that cannot fade away. There, though I see your face no more upon earth, I have the hope of meeting with you again; both of us divested of all that

can clog or injure our spirits, and both participating that fulness of joy which flows from God's right hand for evermore. To his tender protection I commend you, and remain with sincere esteem your affectionate friend."

From JOHN WESLEY,

"Mr. Oglethorp, you know, went so far as to begin settling a colony without negroes; but at length the voice of those villains prevailed who sell their country and their God for gold, who laugh at human nature and compassion, and defy all religion, but that of getting money. It is certainly our duty to do all in our power to check this growing evil, and something may be done by spreading those tracts which place it in a true light. But I fear it will not be stopped till all the kingdoms of this earth, become the kingdoms of our God."

From NATHANIEL GILBERT, of Antigua.

October 29th, 1763.

"I desire to embrace as my brethren all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. I cannot but

think that all true Christians agree in fundamentals. Your tracts concerning slavery are very just, and it is a matter I have often thought of, even before I became acquainted with the truth: your arguments are forcible against purchasing slaves, or being any way concerned in that trade."

The subsequent extracts from letters addressed to his friend, the late Samuel Allinson, of Burlington, in New Jersey, who was one of his coadjutors in that state, for promoting the abolition of the slave trade, will further show how various and incessant were his efforts in this branch of his labours.

Philadelphia, Tenth Month, 30th, 1772.

"I herewith send thee a small tract (which I desire thou mayest keep) lately sent me by Granville Sharp. It is an appendix to his former treatise, and was published on account of the late negro trial. He has written me a long in-

telligent letter, with relation to the situation of things in London on that head, which I shall be well pleased to have an opportunity to communicate to thee.

"It seems Lord Mansfield, notwithstanding truth forced him to give such a judgment,* was rather disposed to favour the cause of the master than that of the slave. He advised the master to apply to the parliament then sitting, which was done accordingly, but without success. He fears such an application will be renewed at the next session, and is preparing, through his friends in parliament and the bishops, to endeavour to prevent its taking place, and calls for our help from this side the water. In this case, as he desires a speedy answer, I stand in need of the advice of my friends what answer to make him. I have already let one opportunity pass; there will be soon another to Liverpool. I have also to communicate an interesting letter from Benjamin Franklin on the same subject."

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* In the case of Somerset.

Philadelphia, Eleventh Month, 30th, 1772.

"Dear SAMUEL,

"I received both thy letters, inclosing the petitions,* and have been concerned that I have not sooner acquainted thee with what had resulted thereon; but the care of a large school, engagement upon engagement, I think four or five evenings last week, on committees, &c. and the books that I received from England, which I intended to send thee, not being all returned, occasioned the delay.

"The vessel from Virginia being near its departure when the petitions came to hand, I had but just time to confer with James Pemberton, on the expediency of forwarding them, when we concluded best to take more time, and wait for a future opportunity, which he thought would offer. I herewith send thee such of the pieces relating to slavery, &c. of the negroes, as I have been able to get back: people are shamefully careless in not

* Memorials, which Benezet was instrumental in having circulated on the subject of the slave trade, in several of the provinces, addressed to the king and parliament of England.

returning borrowed books. That wanting, wrote by a West Indian, I will send hereafter. I have received since I saw thee, a letter from the chief justice of South Carolina, which will, I believe, afford thee much satisfaction."

Philadelphia, Twelfth Month, 14th, 1773.

"Beloved Friend,

"The passage we were seeking for is Psalms 68, 31: *Princes shall come out of Egypt, Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God,*" under which name all that part of Africa inhabited by negroes may be comprehended; and that these are the people here intended is clear from Jer. 13, 23: "*Can the Ethiopian change his skin?*"

"Since my return I have received letters from Thomas Nicholson in North Carolina, Edward Stabler in Virginia, and James Berry in Maryland, all leading members in their several yearly meetings, (these I shall be glad to communicate to thee,) expressive of their concern for forwarding the great and good work we are engaged in. Edward Stabler, clerk of the yearly meeting of

Virginia, expresses, that though they have not yet received the encouragement they desire to their petition in England, yet it has not abated the zeal of some of their leading men against the traffic."

"*Philadelphia, Third Month, 30th, 1774.*

"I was sorrowfully disappointed in not seeing thee in town. I had just received a long letter from Granville Sharp, which I should have been glad of an opportunity of showing thee, and taking thy advice upon a suitable answer, more particularly upon a matter he appears to have much at heart, viz. our procuring as many petitions as possible from persons of some weight in the several provinces, to the same purport as ours to the assembly, immediately to the king only. As I shall not send my letter before William Dillwyn goes, which may be some time first, perhaps I may still have an opportunity of consulting thee on this matter.

"Inclosed I send thee a copy of an argument,*

* This was an argument in defence of those persons who think it their duty *to protect* slaves that have escaped from

&c. I found in Granville Sharp's letter, which strikes boldly and deeply. I hope the idea will have a tendency to raise generous sentiments in some of thy brethren of the law, whose hearts are not yet quite seared with the love of the world, to appear in the noble cause of real liberty. I showed it to Dr. Rush; and inquiring whether we should publish it in the prints, he replied: '*They would knock us on the head if we did.*' I believe it will in future be profitably made use of. Remember me affectionately to James Kinsey,* I should be glad to know his sentiments on the law reasoning of the argument.

"What a great thing it is to stand up for liberty, true liberty, from a mind truly delivered

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their masters. It is fonnded first on the law as stated in Deuteronomy 23, xv. xvi: "*Thou shalt not deliver unto his master, the servant who is escaped from his master unto thee,*" &c. Secondly, on a maxim of the common law of England, "*that the inferior law must give place to the superior.*" Man's laws, to God's laws, confirmed by the author of the doctor and student, who asserts that even the statute law ought to be accounted null and void, if it be set forth contrary to the laws of God. "*Etiam si aliquod statutem esse editum contra eos nullius vigoris in legibus angliæ censeri debet,*" &c. Chap. sixth.

* Chief Justice of New Jersey.

from all selfishness, in an unfeigned love to God and mankind. O the selfishness of the human heart! How much of it is apt still to cleave to us, even when our designs are upright!"

"Dear SAMUEL,

"I herewith send thee a dozen pamphlets. I should be glad that these and more of the same may be handed to the members of your assembly, and such others in your province, with whom they may be likely to promote a representation being made, to the king and parliament, against the slave trade."

"*Seventh day, 4 o'clock.*

"Dear FRIEND,

* * * * * * * * *

"I should have been very glad to have got thee to peruse the notes (on slavery), which I intend to make, as they will be large, and I wish, if possible, to put them into the hands of the members of every assembly on the continent, except South Carolina and Georgia; but do not desire

thou shouldst be put out of thy way on that occasion. I suppose it will be eight or ten, or more days before they will be in the press. It might preserve me from inadvertently publishing something which might rather weaken the cause we both have at heart. However in this, and all other things, I desire to stand clear in the purity of my design, and leave the event, but watch against my natural activity."

From the magnitude of the object, and his devotedness to its promotion, we might suppose that the abolition of slavery, was the cardinal engagement of his life; and indeed for most other men besides Benezet, it would have been sufficiently great to require all the zeal and perseverance, all the time and talents, as well as all the benevolence, which have usually been displayed in the characters of the most conspicuous philanthropists. Among the celebrated benefactors of mankind, who have run their bright course, and ascended to their reward, there are many names familiar to our recollection, deserving and receiving the tribute of our grateful praise; but those illustrious examples, were dis-

tinguished by some one favourite pursuit, some peculiar trait of beneficence. As in the bountiful dispensation of intellectual power, which gave Newton superiority in one science, and Linnæus in another; that ranked Archimedes an original in mechanics, and yielded to Virgil and Milton the palm of verse; all were great in their respective spheres, whilst, on no one of them, was conferred the felicity of mind, which could intuitively embrace all the subjects for which each was conspicuous. Universality of genius is not more remarkable, nor more rarely witnessed, than the virtue of unbounded love, which was proverbially awarded to Anthony Benezet.

The dreadful effects of war upon nations and individuals, deeply grieved his susceptible heart. He wrote and distributed essays, deprecating that inhuman practice, persuading mankind, with a holy ardour, to desist from such things as were calculated to inflame the passions, and produce those wrathful tempers, that could be appeased only by embruing the hands of brethren in each others blood. On this account, he addressed an energetic and pathetic letter to Frederick, king of Prussia.

For the promotion of the peaceable principles of Christianity, at the important crisis when the representatives of the colonies were assembled, to consult on measures in relation to the impositions of Great Britain, he was induced to visit many of the deputies in congress, and endeavoured to persuade them from a resort to arms; in the benevolent hope, that they might procure the removal of the grievances complained of, without involving the country in war. He thus acquaints one of his friends of an interview which he had with Patrick Henry, a delegate from Virginia.

"*Philadelphia, Tenth Month, 23d,* 1774.

"Dear ——,

"I was well pleased to hear from thee. I have not been unmindful of endeavouring to lay before all the delegates I have conversed with, the dreadful situation of the people in the most southern provinces, and the absolute necessity they are under of ceasing, at least from any farther import of negroes. With Patrick Henry I went further. He gave some attention when I

mentioned from whence I apprehended we must look for deliverance, even from God alone; by pursuing such methods, as would be most agreeable to the nature, of the Beneficent Father of the family of mankind, whose love and regard to his children, even to such as were influenced by wrong dispositions, remained unchangeable. That we could not conciliate the Divine regard, but by acting agreeably to the Divine attribute, which was love, and was to overcome by suffering.

"That whatever wound might be given or received, between us and the mother country, if ever that which was right prevailed, we should mutually mourn over. That as Christianity knew of no enemies, we could not expect deliverance by the violent method proposed, without departing from the true foundation. To this, with seriousness, he replied, that it was strange to him, to find some of the Quakers manifesting a disposition so different from that I had described.

"I reminded him, that many of them had no other claim to our principles, than as they were children or grand-children of those who professed

those principles. I suppose his remark principally arose from the violent spirit which some under our profession are apt to show, more particularly in the congress, amongst whom I understand one of the deputies from your city, and one from ours, appear as principals for promoting such measures.

"I feel but little apprehension at the prospect of things, which to many is so alarming. People are afraid of being disturbed in their enjoyments, in their ease, their confidence in the world, and the things of it. But I fear nothing more than giving way to a spirit whose hope and expectation is from the unchristian, yea unnatural, and cruel measures proposed by many, too many; who seem to have worked themselves to such a pitch, that it looks as if they were athirst for blood! It is from God alone, by true faith in his promises, that deliverance must arise; and if from the prevalence of other measures affliction and distress should be our lot, it will be our own fault if it does not work for our good, Oh! if a sufficient concern prevailed to experience grace to gain the victory, to know all worldly inclinations and desires to be brought under the regulation of the

humbling power of the gospel, many would feel much of self in themselves; inducing to hope and seek for comfort from the world, from our ease and plenty, which is yet as a bar to obtaining an establishment in the pure, the humble, self-denying path of truth.

"If we properly felt our wants, the gulf between us and true peace; if the combat between nature and grace were duly maintained, the dread of outward evils would have little weight with us, however we fall by outward commotion; even if the earth should be dissolved, if in proper dispositions, we cannot fall lower than into God's arms.

"In haste, I remain thy affectionate friend,

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

"P. S. I should have been glad to have seen thyself and dear companion before you left us, but make it a rule to take no exception where no slight is intended; indeed where it is, to bear it, and take the first opportunity to return kindness for the contrary, as most noble, and most conducive to peace."

The celebrated orator and statesman, Patrick Henry, mentioned in the preceding letter, would probably never have developed the sentiments which are contained in the following extract, had not one of Anthony Benezet's works on slavery been sent to him by a correspondent. So candid an acknowledgment of the iniquity of the system, rarely proceeds from those who are unhappily the proprietors of slaves.

"*Hanover, January* 18, 1773.

"Dear Sir,

"I take this opportunity to acknowledge the receipt of Anthony Benezet's book against the slave trade: I thank you for it. It is not a little surprising, that the professors of Christianity, whose chief excellence consists in softening the human heart, in cherishing and improving its finer feelings, should encourage a practice so totally repugnant to the first impressions of right and wrong. What adds to the wonder is, that this abominable practice has been introduced in the most enlightened ages. Times, that seem to have pretensions to boast of high improvements

in the arts and sciences, and refined morality, have brought into general use, and guarded by many laws, a species of violence and tyranny, which our more rude and barbarous, but more honest ancestors detested.

"Is it not amazing, that at a time, when the rights of humanity are defined and understood with precision, in a country, above all others, fond of liberty; that in such an age, and in such a country, we find men professing a religion the most humane, mild, gentle and generous, adopting a principle as repugnant to humanity, as it is inconsistent with the bible, and destructive to liberty? Every thinking, honest man rejects it in speculation. How few in practice from conscientious motives!

"Would any one believe that I am master of slaves, of my own purchase! I am drawn along by the general inconvenience of living here without them. I will not, I cannot, justify it. However culpable my conduct, I will so far pay my devoir to virtue, as to own the excellence and rectitude of her precepts, and lament my want of conformity to them.

"*I believe a time will come when an opportunity will be offered to abolish this lamentable evil.* Every thing we can do, is to improve it, if it happens in our day; if not, let us transmit to our descendants, together with our slaves, a pity for their unhappy lot, and an abhorrence for slavery. If we cannot reduce this wished-for reformation to practice, let us treat the unhappy victims with lenity. It is the furthest advance we can make towards justice. It is a debt we owe to the purity of our religion, to show that it is at variance with that law, which warrants slavery.

"I know not where to stop. I could say many things on the subject; a serious view of which, gives *a gloomy perspective to future times!*"

Almost half a century has elapsed since the interesting ideas contained in this letter were suggested; but alas, no efforts have been used by the law givers of those states, where this "*lamentable evil*" of slavery exists, to "*abolish*" it. The enlightened and liberal mind in which so reasonable an expectation originated, no longer abides on earth, to aid with its comprehensive energies, the long delayed work of mercy and of right.

It is true, that within a few years past, the condition of the slaves in the south, is in some instances meliorated; and dispositions have been manifested by *individuals*, to emancipate their negroes, provided they can be conveyed to those states where *freedom is not an empty sound.* But in the august name of justice, it may be asked, whether by such means the great and solemn purposes which she demands, are to be accomplished? Religion and reason pronounce a negative. It is worse than folly to suppose, that the middle and northern sections of the union, will consent thus to have cast upon them, portions of the black population, conditionally set free by the wills of their masters, debased and corrupted as they are by the ignorance and vices of slavery, whilst it is the opinion of many discreet and benevolent men, that such *partial relief*, tends directly to prolong the practice of slave holding, by the great mass of persons, who feel no compassion for those unhappy sufferers.

What then shall be done? may be the question. The reply is not difficult, nor the plan impracticable; if sincere desires be cultivated to wipe from the nation a stain so foul. Let laws be en-

acted providing for the gradual and final abolition of slavery, by fitting the younger generation of slaves for freedom and settlement, either on some section of country within the jurisdiction of the United States, the climate and situation of which may be suited to their character, or make arrangements for conveying them to the land, whence their fathers were treacherously and inhumanly estranged.

In aid of either of these methods, or of any other which shall have for its object, the redemption of those degraded fellow men from bondage, every facility which pecuniary means can afford, would no doubt be munificently supplied by private donations of benevolent persons, should an application of the public treasure, to that object, be deemed inadmissible. No matter what sacrifice is made, when humanity and justice require the offering. Our offence has been high, obdurate and conscious; the expiation must be commensurate.

Several of Anthony Benezet's tracts on the subject of war, especially one entitled "*Thoughts on the Nature of War,*" published in 1776, were

sent to persons of distinction and influence in government in our own country, and in Europe. The following letter accompanied a packet containing some of those treatises, addressed to

"HENRY LAURENS, PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

"The fear of intruding upon thy engagements, having prevented my waiting upon thee, I take the liberty, with due respect, to enclose the within pamphlets, which I earnestly request thou wilt seriously peruse; as they contain matters of the utmost importance to the cause thou art engaged in.

"How far, as followers of a Saviour who enjoins us to love one another, even to love our enemies, and who finally gave up his life for our salvation, we can readily continue in a war, whereby so many thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow men, equally with ourselves the objects of redeeming grace, are brought to a miserable and untimely end; not to mention the corruption of manners, the waste of substance, &c. thereby introduced, is a matter which cer-

tainly calls for the most serious consideration of those, who retain the least love for mankind. '*The Thoughts on War*,' will, I trust, lessen, if not remove any prejudice which our Friends' refusal to join in any military operation may have occasioned. The caution, &c. on slavery, will I believe in general, meet with thy approbation; it was re-printed in London, and delivered to about eight hundred members of parliament, and officers of the crown.

"I respectfully remain thy friend,

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

Deploring as he did, whatever had a tendency to abridge the comforts, increase the sorrows, or to endanger the present and eternal safety of men; he could not but discern the ensnaring influence incident to the habitual use of spirituous liquors. Observation had furnished him with afflicting evidence, that, to this fruitful cause of evil, might be traced many of the most distressing instances of the premature termination of human life; the overthrow of domestic happiness; and the pros-

tration of the highest intellect. Against the employment, therefore, of that article, excepting in the materia medica, he maintained a continual and faithful testimony. His exertions to diminish the abuse of it, were not confined to oral argument and admonition, but he conceived it to be of sufficient importance, to communicate his sentiments respecting it to the world, in a pamphlet which he published in 1778.

In the same year he also issued a small work entitled: "*Serious Reflections on the Times, addressed to the well-disposed of every religious Denomination.*" In this treatise he laments the insensibility which he conceived to be too generally manifested by the inhabitants, respecting the "*judgment of war,*" which then involved the country in distress; and he endeavoured to persuade the people to cultivate a spirit of reconciliation. He closes his book in the following affectionate and feeling manner: "Let us not, beloved brethren, forget our profession as Christians, nor the blessing promised by Christ to the peace makers; but let us all sincerely address our common Father for ability to pray, not for the destruction of our enemies, who are still our brethren, the purchase

of our blessed Redeemer's blood, but for an agreement with them; not in order to indulge our passions in the gain and delights of this vain world, and forget that we are called to be as pilgrims and strangers in it; but that we may be more composed, and better fitted for the kingdom of God; that, in the dispensations of his good pleasure, he may grant us such a peace, as may prove to the consolation of the Church, as well as the nation, and be on earth an image of the tranquillity of Heaven."

Toward the aboriginal inhabitants of the American continent, there flowed from the expanded heart of A . ny Benezet, copious streams of solicitude and sympathy. He looked upon them as a race of his brethren, who were, equally with himself, the objects of Divine regard; and though untaught in the arts, and strangers to the advantages of civilized life, he respected the correctness of some of their practices, and admired the wisdom of many of their laws.

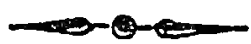
Notwithstanding their "*untutored minds*," had never been made acquainted with the written history of the Christian religion, nor their reason

replenished from the stores of learning, still he believed that their sacred rites found acceptance with God, as devotions intended to give evidence of their belief in His eternal existence, providence, and government. Beholding them through this amiable and compassionate medium, he could not sanction the contumely which they suffered, and he publicly, and fearlessly avowed his opinions of the injustice and inhumanity, of any measures, either of the provincial governments, or of individuals, which tended to the violation of any of their rights of person, or of property.

From the scraps of Indian history which have been found among his manuscripts, it is evident that he was collecting important facts, and recording interesting events concerning that people; probably with the design of furnishing a more general account of them, than that which he published in 1784, entitled, "Some Observations on the Situation, Disposition and Character, of the Indian Natives of this Continent."

In the year 1763, when Sir Jeffery Amherst, commander in chief of the British forces, was at

New York, preparing to open a campaign against the Indians, Benezet, anticipating with horror the wide spreading devastation which must be the effect of hostilities with the natives, addressed to him the following letter.



"*Philadelphia, Seventh Month,* 1763.

"With much respect, and from, I trust, nothing but love to mankind, and a particular concern for the great distress, which will necessarily attend the inhabitants of our large extended frontiers, should a war be once kindled with the Indians; and from a persuasion of the justice and benevolence of the General's disposition, I make bold earnestly to request a few moments of thy kind attention, whilst I make mention of what I apprehend is, in a great degree, the occasion of the violent part the Indians have of late acted; drawn as well from several years observation of the disposition of the Indians, as from conversation with Frederic Post, a person who resided many years among these people, and had been often employed by our government as a messenger to them.

"It appears the Indians have long entertained a jealously that the English intended violently to dispossess and drive them off of their lands. This is more particularly verified from an account written by the above mentioned Frederic Post, of his journey to the river Ohio, when sent there by the governor of Pennsylvania, in order to divert the Indians settled on that river, from giving any assistance to the French. In a conversation he had with those Indians, before Pittsburgh was evacuated, the Indians repeatedly expressed their desire that when the French were removed, the English should also evacuate the lands to the westward of the Alleghany mountains, agreeably to the expectation which had been given them, by messages sent to them in the name of the English government, viz. 'that the English intended to oblige the French to abandon all the country on the Ohio, without any design of settling those lands themselves; that they only proposed to establish a trade with the western Indians on a fair and good footing.'

"And in the instructions given to Frederick Post in his journey to a great council of Indians on the Ohio, he was directed to assure the Indians

of our sincere disposition towards peace, and that we should do our utmost endeavours not only to renew and strengthen our former friendship and alliances, but to settle every thing to their satisfaction that is likely to occasion differences; and to give the Indians every where the strongest assurances that no person should be permitted to make settlements on their lands, or any where to the westward of the Alleghany mountains.

"It appears by Post's Journal, that immediately after the English had possessed themselves of Fort Duquesne, the Indians desired it might be evacuated, and that the English should retire to the eastward of the Alleghany mountains, but this not being agreeable to the English, the Indians were repeatedly put upon to alter that resolution; but they persisted in it, and at different times replied as follows: 'We have already answered what we have to say to the general, that he should go back over the mountains; we have nothing to say to the contrary. We have told them three times to leave the place, but they insist upon staying here; if therefore, they will be destroyed by the French and Indians, we cannot help them.'

"The question being again put to them, the counsellors said: 'They had spoken nothing but what was agreed between the Indians at Custkusking. We have told them,' say they, 'three times to go back, but they will not go, insisting upon staying here; now you will let the governor general and all people know, that our desire is that they should go back, till the other nations had joined in the peace, and then they may come, and build a trading house.'

"A noted Indian, one of the chief counsellors, told Post and his company in secret, 'that all the Indians had jointly agreed to defend their hunting place at Alleghany, and suffer nobody to settle there; so he begged us to tell the governor general and all other people not to settle there, and if the English would draw back over the mountains they would get the other nations into their interest; but if they staid and settled there, all the nations would be against them, and he was afraid it would be a great war, and never come to a peace again.'

"It was the opinion of Frederic Post, that if the English did not attend to this request, and would

persist in holding possession of Pittsburgh, and suffering the lands to the westward of the Alleghany to be settled without the consent of the Indians, it would be a further occasion of bloodshed. It appears that the six nations were also disgusted at Pittsburgh and Fort Augusta being retained, and fortified by the English, by what passed at the treaty held last summer at Lancaster with governor Hamilton; when the governor proposing to have the consent of the Indians for carrying goods by the west branch of Susquehanna to Pittsburgh, the head warrior of the Senecas appeared much disturbed at the proposal, and among other things replied: 'Brother, you may remember you told me, (speaking on behalf of the whole nation) when you was going to Pittsburgh, you would build a fort against the French, and you told me that you wanted none of our land. Our cousins (pointing to the Ohio Indians who were then present) know this: You promised to go away as soon as you drove the French away; and yet you stay there and build houses, and make it stronger and stronger every day; for this reason we entirely deny your request; you shall not have a road this way.'

"Upon the whole it is thought, that the apprehension the Indians are under, that the English intend by degrees to dispossess them of their land, is the cause of the cruel violence they have lately committed, which probably, is not without the knowledge and consent of the six nations; those political people making use of the smaller nations to accomplish their designs, but in such a manner as that they may rather act the part of mediators than accessaries, when perhaps they are principals.

"Could the Indians be made easy in this respect, I much hope that the ancient friendship formerly subsisting between them and the English would be restored; an extensive and profitable trade would be carried on with them; and our people might securely settle, though perhaps in a more compact manner, upon those lands already purchased, which it is thought would be fruitful of many advantages; and doubtless the Indians would (as they have always done) let the English have more land upon very easy terms, as fast as we should be ready to settle it; which is the more likely, because the land back of the provinces for many hundred miles, even as far west as the

Mississippi, is but thinly inhabited; there being, by credible accounts, but few thousands of Indians upon that large extent of country; yet enough to drive our frontier inhabitants to the greatest extremity, should the English resolve to possess and maintain that land by force of arms.

"It is often used as an argument for maintaining the strong places the English have taken in the Indian countries, that those places were freely granted by the Indians to the French, and therefore the property of the English by right of conquest; but upon inquiry, I believe the conclusion will be seen to be wrong, and it will appear that it was generally either under pretence of building trading houses, or by violence, that the French got footing amongst them.

"This was particularly the case in the settlement made by the French at Pittsburgh, as appears by a treaty held at Carlisle by the government of Pennsylvania in 1753, with some deputies of the Indians settled on the Ohio. They came to acquaint the governors of Pennsylvania and Virginia, that the French were coming up the lakes with a large body of troops, to build

four strong houses on the Ohio; that their council had sent twice to forbid the French advancing any further upon their land; but that the French general had manifested the greatest disregard to their opposition, and told them he was resolved to build four strong houses, (of which Pittsburgh was one,) and farther, that he intended to prevent them from making any more foolish bargains about land, with the English.

"Perhaps I have said nothing to the general but what he is already fully acquainted with; yet I trust the weightiness of the subject, and the uprightness of my intention, will plead my excuse for the liberty I have presumed to take.

"There are about one hundred and fifty Indians at a place called Wyaloosing, situate upon the north branch of Susquehanna, about seventy miles above Wyoming. These Indians are an industrious, religiously minded people. The name of their chief is Papunobal; they absolutely refused to join the other Indians in the last war, though threatened with death on that account.

"There is also another Indian settlement about forty miles higher up the same branch of the

Susquehanna, consisting of about one hundred persons, the name of which I am not certain of; their chief men are Robert White and Samuel Curtis; they also are a sober and industrious people, principally of the Nanticoke tribe, who about twenty years ago, at the request of the five nations, were permitted to remove from Maryland to the place where they now are. Upon the breaking out of the last Indian war, their chief man sent a string of Wampum to the other Indians with these words: "Brethren, if you desire to become grey, and see many days upon this earth, leave off striking the English."*

The disposition of many of the common people, and indeed some others, is at present such, and a spirit of so much wrath is kindled in their breasts, that there is danger not only that these Indian settlements, but that several other smaller settlements of the Indians within our province, may be destroyed, should these troubles continue; if an uncommon care is not taken to prevent it. And here I beg the general's excuse if I add, that

* The term "*English*" used in this letter, means the white people.

notwithstanding the conduct of the Indians has, for some years past, been such as has raised a great prejudice against them; yet from near seventy years experience, the people of Pennsylvania, and I believe also many in New York, know that the Indians, when not irritated and vitiated by the conduct and converse of the worst of the Europeans, such as the Indian traders too generally prove, are, in general, a people that will be true to their promises; if strict care be taken on the Europeans' part to fulfil their engagements to them.

"*And further, may I entreat the general for our blessed Redeemer's sake, from the nobility and humanity of his heart, that he would condescend to use all moderate measures, if possible, to prevent that cruel and prodigious effusion of blood, that deep anxiety and distress that must fill the breasts of so many helpless people, should an Indian war be once entered upon!*

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

Superadded to his individual exertions in this good work, he was one of those, who influenced

by the purest motives of good will toward the Indians, of concern for the real welfare of the whole community, and penetrated by a generous sense of the kind dispositions, which had been manifested by the forefathers of the natives to the first European settlers in Pennsylvania, were induced, in the year 1756, to form a society entitled: "*The Friendly Association for Regaining and Preserving Peace with the Indians by Pacific Measures.*"

The course pursued by several of the proprietors' governors toward the Indians, had been radically opposed to the views of the freemen of the province of Pennsylvania; as may be seen by reference to the measures adopted at different periods, by their representatives in the assembly. Some of the warmest controversies which occurred in early times, between the proprietary government and the people, grew out of the conflicting opinions which were entertained on this subject. The establishment of stores on the borders, by persons to whom the governors granted permission; the introduction of spirituous liquors among the natives by those traders, contrary to the wish, and in some cases after the express forbidding of

the Indians themselves; together with the corrupt and cruel conduct of many of those mercantile agents, and the persons they had about them, were the real causes of most, if not of all, the hostile incursions of the natives upon the frontier settlements.

Hence it was apparent to those who were immediately entrusted with the interests of the people of the state, that so long as such a course was pursued by the proprietors' representatives, not only the dreadful ravages of war must be produced, and the expences for the support of the government be multiplied, but the extension of settlement upon fair and honourable principles, would be impeded, or wholly suppresed. The preservation of tranquillity with the Indians was therefore the interest, and the wish of the great mass of the inhabitants; whilst, unhappily, the conduct of the executive and its friends, tended to interrupt the relations of harmony with their aboriginal neighbours.

It is not more astonishing than lamentable, that any of the descendants of PENN, *the wise and benevolent founder*, should allow of such devia-

tions from his illustrious example and conduct towards the Indians; and in the final prostration of the power, and loss of the property, of the family in Pennsylvania, has been remarkably verified, the prophetic warning of their great and good ancestor. In a letter written by him in 1682, after showing the happy effects which would result if the inhabitants of this province and their descendants, adhered to "*justice, mercy, equity and the fear of the Lord,*" he thus exhibits the affecting contrast, that must be produced by the disregard of those solemn duties: "*If not, their heirs, and my heirs too, will lose all, and desolation will follow.*"

The unremitting exertions of the "*Friendly Association,*" in carrying on the purposes of its establishment, were auxiliary to the laudable efforts, in the same cause, of the provincial legislature; and consequently the society experienced the opposing influence of the executive department of the government. But being protected by the strength of the public feeling in favour of humanity and justice, it was not only regardless of proprietary assault, but firmly and boldly remonstrated against their measures, by addressing the governors and their principals themselves.

The association expended in presents of clothing, &c. to the natives, during seven years of its existence, upwards of fifteen thousand dollars; which sum had been voluntarily supplied by donations of the members.

In the year 1757, besides other proofs of its regard for the Indians, and in order that they might be possessed of an object which would frequently remind them of the intentions of their friends, the association had a medal designed and struck, bearing an appropriate device and motto, which was distributed among them. Perhaps an apology may be necessary for introducing a representation of this medal* in a volume of memoirs of Anthony Benezet; but as he was interested in its execution, and as it is a prominent fact in the history of an Institution to which he was strongly attached, the preservation, in this place, of this primitive memorial, may not be entirely irrelative. The following letter, though not written with a view to publication, will authenticate the genuine origin of the die,† from an impression of which the engraving is taken.

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* See Frontispiece.

† The die was engraved in Philadelphia, by Edward Duffield, and cost the society fifteen pounds.

"*Philadelphia, Sixth Month, 12th,* 1813.

"The impressions which I now respectfully offer for thy acceptance, are from dies that have long been in possession of my predecessor and myself; at the early time they were engraved, coining presses were unknown in this country; they were therefore cut on punches, fixed in a socket, and struck with a sledge hammer. The Indian medal of 1757, was struck at the expence of a society (chiefly composed of Friends) formed in Philadelphia, for the express purpose of promoting *Peace* with the Indian tribes. The appropriate inscription on the reverse is truly *characteristic*, and will serve to convey to posterity, a just idea of the men of influence in those days. I remember well the striking of the Indian medal by my father.* It was executed in silver, and presented to the Indians by the society.

"Although this medal may at present be thought of little value, I have no doubt in a future day, it will be considered as *interesting*, not only from the occasion for which it was struck,

* Joseph Richardson, the elder, was a member of the Friendly Association, and by profession a silversmith.

but as it may serve to show the progress of the arts in our country.

"Thy friend,

"JOSEPH RICHARDSON.

"To Thomas Wistar."

Of this Friendly Association, Anthony Benezet was an active and useful member, having been several times elected one of the sixteen trustees who managed its affairs. In the prosecution of his duty in that capacity, he attended several conferences which were held with the Indians in their own country; cheerfully enduring the fatigue, privation and exposure consequent to travelling in a part of the province then almost a wilderness. He also early saw, and suggested the propriety of endeavouring to convey to the inhabitants of the forest, the knowledge of agriculture and domestic arts; and, as will be subsequently seen, directed by his will, that a part of his estate should be applied to the education of Indian children. These he conceived to be the most judicious preparatory measures, for leading the minds of the aborigines to the substantial blessings of Christian virtue.

In the midst of these various and important avocations, a call was made upon his active benevolence from a quarter, and of a nature the most novel and unexpected. But, ever prepared to dispense good, he obeyed the summons with promptitude and cheerfulness. It was a duty no less formidable than that of extending protection and care to a considerable part of a colony of people, whose condition was deplorably wretched, and wholly friendless. Previous to giving an account of his unremitted attentions to these unhappy exiles, it may be proper to furnish a brief notice of their history and character, and of the most extraordinary and unjustifiable measures which terminated in their banishment.

These helpless strangers were a portion of the descendants of those French inhabitants of Nova Scotia, who after the treaty of Utrecht in 1713, by which the province was ceded to England, were permitted to hold their lands, on condition of making a declaration of allegiance to their new sovereign; which acknowledgment of fidelity was given under an express stipulation, that they and their posterity should not be required to bear

arms, either against their Indian neighbours or transatlantic countrymen. This contract was at several subsequent periods revived, and renewed to their children; and such was the notoriety of the compact, that for half a century they bore the name, and, with some few exceptions, maintained the character of neutrals. They were a people remarkable for their piety and mildness of disposition; were frugal and industrious; strongly attached to the French monarch, and unalterably devoted to the Catholic religion.

During the war of 1755, some of the young neutrals were detected in conveying intelligence to the Indian and French forces, then acting against the province. This defection greatly incensed the British commander, and produced a determination to punish the whole fraternity, by the confiscation of their property, and the banishment of their persons to different places along the sea coast, from Massachusetts bay to South Carolina.

When the period had arrived for carrying this cruel purpose into execution, an order was issued requiring the neutrals to assemble at the different

ports, under the specious pretext of them having communicated to them some important, and valuable information. The unsuspecting Acadians, utterly ignorant of the destiny that awaited them, were obedient to the requisition; and when collected at the time and places appointed, they were informed that their lands were forfeited to the crown; that they themselves were prisoners, and were to be immediately removed from the province.

Vessels being in readiness to convey them away, they were ordered on board. A scene of distress, and confusion ensued; the military who had been purposely concealed until now, made their appearance, and the embarkation was soon effected at the point of the bayonet, with the exception of between two and three hundred, who escaped and sought refuge in the neighbouring forests. Toward those who fled, all possible measures were adopted to coerce them back to captivity: the country was laid waste, to prevent their subsistence, and many of them were shot, and otherwise perished.

This community, at the time of this disastrous event, amounted to almost seven thousand per-

sons, but the exact number who were banished, cannot be accurately ascertained; upwards of one thousand of them were sent to Massachusetts bay, and about five hundred to Philadelphia.

The melancholy story of their sufferings, would have awakened compassion in the most obdurate heart; and intensely acute must have been the feelings of Benezet, when introduced to the knowledge of their dreadful fate. He at once adopted the latter of these sufferers as his children, and proceeded to employ every exertion in his power to soften the rigour of their condition. As he was enabled to converse with them in their own language, it facilitated their necessary intercourse with the inhabitants, whilst it was a circumstance that could not but have mitigated their sorrows; since they had found in him, not only a friend who yielded them all the comfort and consolation he could bestow, but an interpreter, who was qualified and willing to hear, and make known the history of their afflictions.

On their disembarkation, the neutrals were taken charge of by the conservators of the poor, and conveyed to a building which had been occu-

pied as a lodging for soldiers. Many of them were labouring under disease; some were enfeebled by their crowded condition and the scanty fare of the passage; others were disconsolate in consequence of being separated from their nearest connexions; whilst all were dejected with the striking reverse from their former comforts and independence.

Though the funds for their support were for a time supplied from the public purse, Anthony Benezet undertook to provide for their subsistence, in the purchase and distribution of every thing which they required. To the sick and dying, he administered relief, so long as human exertion was availing, or could hope for success; and when death terminated the sufferings of any of them, he would perform the last office of respect to their remains.

The inconvenient construction of the barracks, as well as want of room in them, being ill suited to their accommodation, he solicited permission of his friend, the late pious Samuel Emlen, to occupy part of a square of ground owned by him in the south western section of Philadelphia, with

buildings for the residence of the neutrals. The grant being promptly made, Benezet proceeded to collect subscriptions, and was soon enabled to purchase materials and erect a sufficient number of small houses, to which they were immediately removed.

The supply from the public treasury ceasing on their change of situation, he was obliged to devise modes of employment for them to procure a livelihood; and among various occupations, to which he directed their attention, was the manufacture of wooden shoes and linsey cloth: the materials for the composition of the latter article, was principally obtained by their gathering rags from the streets of the city, which they washed, and otherwise prepared for the purpose.

In addition to the personal services thus rendered, he paid out of his small income, annuities to several of the most ancient and helpless. It is related of him among other proofs of his kindness toward them, that his wife, having made unsuccessful search for a pair of blankets which she had recently purchased for the use of the family, came into the room where her husband

was writing, and expressing some surprise as to what could have become of them, his attention was arrested; and when he understood the cause of her uneasiness, "*Oh!*" said he, "*my dear, I gave them some evenings since, to one of the poor neutrals.*"

Thus, for several years he devoted himself to the advancement of the interests of those people, who by death, and removal to different places, were ultimately reduced to a very small number. Such was his assiduity and care of them, that it produced a jealousy in the mind of one of the oldest men among them, of a very novel and curious description; which was communicated to a friend of Benezet's, to whom he said: "*It is impossible that all this kindness is disinterested; Mr. Benezet must certainly intend to recompense himself by treacherously selling us.*" When their patron and protector was informed of this ungrateful suspicion, it was so far from producing an emotion of anger, or an expression of indignation, that he lifted up his hands and laughed immoderately.

The following extract from a memorial to the *king of Great Britain*, which was prepared

soon after their arrival in Philadelphia, and was no doubt drafted at the request of the neutrals by their friend Benezet, will corroborate the history of their sufferings, in their own manner of relating it.

"Thus we, our ancient parents, and grand parents, (men of great integrity, and approved fidelity to your majesty,) and our innocent wives and children, became the unhappy victims to those groundless fears. We were transported into the English colonies; and this was done in so much haste, and with so little regard to our necessities, and the tenderest ties of nature, that from the most social enjoyments and affluent circumstances, many found themselves destitute of the necessaries of life, and separated parents from children and husbands from wives, some of whom have not to this day met again. We were so crowded in the transport vessels, that we had not room even for all our bodies to lay down at once; and consequently were prevented from carrying with us proper necessaries, especially for the comfort, and support of the aged and weak; many of whom quickly ended their misery with their lives. And even those amongst us

who had suffered deeply for your majesty, on account of their attachment to your majesty, were equally involved in the common calamity, of which Rene-Lablane, the notary public beforementioned, is a remarkable instance.

He was seized, confined, and brought away among the rest of the people; and his *family, consisting of twenty children, and about one hundred and fifty grand children,* were scattered in different colonies, so that he was put on shore at New York with only his wife and two youngest children, in a [illegible]nfirm state of health, from whence he joined three more of his children at Philadelphia; where he died without any more notice being taken of him than any of us, notwithstanding his many years labour, and deep suffering for your majesty's service.

"The miseries we have since endured, are scarce sufficiently to be expressed; being reduced for a livelihood to toil and hard labour, in a southern clime, so disagreeable to our constitutions, that most of us have been prevented by sickness from procuring the necessary subsistence for our families; and therefore are threatened with that which

we esteem the greatest aggravation of all our sufferings; even of having our children forced from us and bound out to strangers, and exposed to contagious distempers unknown in our native country. This, compared with the affluence and ease we enjoyed, shows our condition to be extremely wretched. We have already seen in this province two hundred and fifty of our people, half the number that were landed here, perish through misery and various diseases."

In 1756, Anthony Benezet was chosen one of the overseers of the "public schools, founded by charter from William Penn, in the town and county of Philadelphia;" but two years after, entering into the service of the board, as a teacher, his delicacy induced him to resign the office.

The "contributors to the Pennsylvanian Hospital" elected him a manager of that Institution in 1757. He served the term for which he was appointed, and declined a re-election, not in consequence of an indisposition to yield his services to the establishment, but because his benevolent operations were of so general a nature, as to ren-

der it inconvenient for him to discharge the specific duties of the station.

He was never known to interfere with the affairs of state, except when he was desirous that its energies should be exerted for promoting the happiness of his fellow creatures. If, however, he had occasion to solicit persons in power for such purposes, he was indefatigable in his exertions to obtain the object in view. During the sitting of the legislature in 1780, a session memorable for the enactment of a law, which commenced the gradual abolition of slavery in Pennsylvania, he had private interviews on the subject, with every member of the government, and thus, no doubt, essentially contributed to the adoption of that celebrated measure.

His agency in arresting a number of kidnapped black people, on their passage from New Jersey through Philadelphia, toward one of the southern states, and whose claim to freedom by his perseverance was ultimately established, gave rise to a society for the relief of free negroes unlawfully held in bondage; since incorporated with ample authority, and over the deliberations

of which have successively presided Dr. Benjamin Franklin, James Pemberton, Dr. Benjamin Rush, and Dr. Caspar Wistar.

Among the numerous productions of his fertile philanthropy, was a plan which he conceived to prevent an oppressive landlord from distraining for rent, the *stove* of an indigent tenant; a bill predicated upon his suggestion was introduced to the general assembly of the commonwealth by Miers Fisher, then a member of that body, which became a law.

Besides other topics of a benevolent nature which were introduced by him, during an interview with the marquis Chattelleux, near the termination of the military services of that officer in America, in the war of the revolution, was an inquiry respecting the method invented in Europe, for restoring persons supposed to be drowned. This application induced the marquis to promise him not only a written account of the practice adopted by his countrymen, but also a box of apparatus such as were used in the seaports of France; both which he accordingly sent. This information arrived about the time when a

society was formed in Philadelphia, for the humane purpose of endeavouring to recover suspended animation occasioned by immersion in water, and imparted much instruction to the newly organized association.

The features already described, are some of the most prominent in what may be termed the public life of Anthony Benezet; let us now contemplate him in a less extended sphere of action. Private character, he does not appear to have had; it is almost impossible to discover a line, which separated his pursuits, or abstracted his mind, from the great purpose for which he seems to have lived, *the good of his species.*

As a member of the religious society of Friends, his labours were highly valuable and important. The profession which he made of Christianity was never contradicted by his precepts, nor sullied by his practice. Unbounded in his charity, his great aim was to discover some favourable symptom in the dispositions of those whose course was devious, and that, when discerned, he cherished with pious solicitude. His access to the most erring of his brethren and others, was always easy; and

where human efforts could be instrumental to reclaim offenders, the spirit of the gospel, as it flowed toward such through his heart, seldom failed of gaining victory.

The fundamental doctrines of religion, as they were taught by the Redeemer of mankind himself, comprised his creed, regulated his conduct, administered to the purest of his earthly enjoyments, and constituted the basis on which rested his hope of future felicity. He often said, that the memorable sermon uttered upon the Mount, taught enough to occupy the attention of the sincere in heart; and if duly regarded, its lessons would ensure the present, and everlasting welfare of men.

He deprecated whatever had a tendency to decoy the mind, from those plain and simple manifestations of duty, which are mercifully afforded by the Deity, for promoting the happiness of his accountable creation. Consequently he did not hesitate to disapprove of all theological disquisitions, on abstruse and doubtful points His opinion on this subject is thus clearly and fully stated in one of his note books.

"I have often much wished the enlightened William Law, had not launched out in some matters which, I apprehend, tend more to employ the natural activity of the mind, than to center his readers, as his other writings do, in a childlike humble state of watching and prayer for Divine aid, from a feeling sense of the depth of their misery, and inability to redeem themselves. Indeed if this humble disposition, which in all its religious motions seeks solely the honour of God, and the good of mankind, had been more prevalent, true Christian charity would have been better maintained, with respect to those particular opinions, which have of late caused so much unprofitable debate amongst us.

"I know some think great advantage will arise, from people's having what are called right ideas of God; and that those opinions are productive of much tenderness and charity in the minds of such who adopt them; but has this indeed been the case? Have the meekness and gentleness of Christ been more apparent in those who have been zealous advocates for this opinion, than in other people? Ideas, however exalted they may appear, except impressed on the mind by truth,

are still but bare ideas, and can have no influence in subduing that love of the world, that carnality of mind, that obduracy of heart, and principally, that poisonous idolatry of self, so apt, under one subtle form or another, to insinuate itself even into the hearts of such as have already made some good advances in religion."

Having lived during that interesting period, when the religious community to which he belonged, was occupied with those considerations which led to its purification from the iniquity of slavery, he took an active part in promoting that righteous work. His ardent and pathetic communications on this subject, in the select assemblies of his brethren, were powerful and irresistible He awakened the unconcerned, confirmed the wavering, and infused energy into the most zealous.

On one occasion, during the annual convention of the society at Philadelphia, when that body was engaged on the subject of slavery, as it related to its own members, some of whom had not wholly relinquished the practice of keeping negroes in

bondage, a difference of sentiment was manifested, as to the course which ought to be pursued. For a moment it appeared doubtful which opinion would preponderate. At this critical juncture, Benezet left his seat, which was in an obscure part of the house, and presented himself weeping, at an elevated door in the presence of the whole congregation, whom he thus addressed: "*Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.*"* He said no more: under the solemn impression which succeeded this emphatic quotation, the proposed measure received the united sanction of the assembly.

About the year 1770, he was appointed to the important station of an elder, the delicate and interesting duties of which he was peculiarly qualified to fulfil. He was especially desirous that the society should sustain the character for plainness and moderation which had distinguished its origin, and was often occupied in communicating such counsel and advice, as would promote that object. He saw that the accumulation of wealth among his fellow members, induced habits and

* Psalms lxviii. 31.

associations, which were often fatal to their maintenance of primitive simplicity; and it was a primary duty with him, to dissuade them from the inordinate pursuit of secular occupations.

He conceived it to be derogatory to the dignity of the human mind, if its energies sought no other exercise, than such as immersed it in selfishness; a disposition which, more than any other, he held to be opposed to the proper use of its noble endowments, and subversive of the exalted happiness of which, in futurity, it was designed to partake. In 1780, he published, in English and French, a book, entitled, "*A Short Account of the Religious Society of Friends commonly called Quakers.*" This work was esteemed the best succinct view of the principles, as well as discipline and economy of the society, that had then appeared.* In the concluding observations of the author, it is clearly shown upon what ground he believed the doctrines which they profess, could be upheld with purity and effect.

* A more enlarged work of this kind has since been written by HENRY TUKE entitled, "The Principles of Religion as professed by the Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers, written for the Instruction of their Youth, and the Information of Strangers."—EDITOR.

"If," says he, "upon observing the conduct of many who profess to be of this religious society, any should be ready to take offence at the great deviation which may appear from those principles set forth in the foregoing account, let them consider, that the human heart, in its fallen state, is prone to evil, and by joining therewith it may gradually become very corrupt; that a real change thereof is not gained by birthright, or a mere association with any people; but only by submission to and a humble abiding under, the cross of Christ.

"Thus the sincere and faithful among them, who are daily exercised in labouring to have their wills brought, in all things, into a conformity with the Divine will, knowing that nothing less than this can entitle to membership in the true church, the Bride the Lamb's wife, they often find a necessity laid upon them, to bear their testimony against the subtle delusive spirit of the world, in its various appearances; and also to press their fellow members in religious profession, not to rest contented in the regular observance of any form, or the bare acknowledgment of any principles; but to strive to become acquainted with the

operation of the Spirit of Truth in themselves, and closely adhere to its monitions and guidance, as the only safe path through this life, and the foundation of an unshaken hope of a blessed enjoyment, in that which is to come.

"Therefore, may every tender inquirer after the right way, not look out at the conduct of others, nor place their dependance upon any man; but carefully attend to the openings and leadings of the Holy Spirit in their own minds, and as they follow on to know the Lord, they will be brought to a degree of the same experience with the apostle: We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

His reasons in support of the peculiarity of some of the practices of the society, as being consistent with scripture authority, were illustrated in a small work which he published in 1782, entitled: "*On the Plainness, and innocent Simplicity of the Christian Religion.*"

In addition to his own opinions on the subjects upon which he wrote, and which he conceived it to be his duty to print and distribute, he was often engaged in selecting and compiling sentiments from various authors, the moral and religious tendency of which, he believed might prove beneficial. These tracts he would himself industriously circulate; and when he heard of his acquaintance or others, who were about to travel, he enlisted their services to spread his pamphlets; "*esteeming it,*" he said, "*indeed a favour, in this self-pleasing age, if people will but give them a serious perusal.*"

He would frequently present his friends with copies of his essays as soon as they appeared, and those occasions were embraced to convey to them the feelings of his mind. The subjoined notes written for that purpose, exhibit the amiable manner in which he discharged such affectionate duties.

"To H. H.

"I herewith send a couple of pamphlets, the perusal of which will, I hope, be agreeable to

thyself, and my kind friend thy spouse. We are so liable in this frail state of existence to suffer our minds, even imperceptibly, to be so much engrossed with the trifles of life, and indeed its fears as well as its joys may be truly so termed, when compared with the solemn scenes which lay before us, that I trust any thing which may tend to call us back to ourselves, cannot be taken but in good part, from those whose desires we are persuaded are sincere for our best welfare.

"How sweet,' says the pious Brainard, when near his end, "how sweet is a spirit of devotion, a spirit of seriousness and Divine solemnity, a spirit of gospel simplicity, of love and tenderness.' How vastly superior are the pleasure, peace, and satisfaction derived from these Divine frames, to that which we sometimes pursue in things vain and trifling; indeed our own better experience teaches us, that in the midst of such laughter the heart is sorrowful, and that there is no true satisfaction but in God.'

"Your real friend,

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

"To Dr. —— of Wilmington.

"I am persuaded, my kind friend, thou wilt excuse this freedom. But a good opportunity offering, I take the liberty to enclose a few pamphlets. They contain some serious items on the solemn truths of our holy religion. That at the beginning is worthy of notice as well for the weight as the great importance of it. The small tract at the end may tend to remove some mistaken prejudices which too often prevail for want of due information.

The other tracts, though written by persons differing in circumstantial matters, yet all agree in enforcing the amendment of the heart, the only end and aim of the gospel, yet so expressed as not to infringe that charity, (*i. e.* the love of Christ,) which is the distinguishing badge of Christianity. I shall be glad to hear of thy welfare; and in that great circle which is not limited by party or country, but with cordiality of affection embraces the whole creation,

"I salute thee, and remain thy friend,

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

The expense of printing being defrayed from his own purse, and deriving no pecuniary compensation from his publications, together with his great liberality in other respects, produced in the minds of some of his friends a fear, lest he should forget his own wants in the dispensing of his income. This idea being once suggested to him, he said, "*I lose nothing by doing so. I once sent to a religious man in North Carolina, with whom I had no personal acquaintance, a number of my tracts, and at his death it was found he had bequeathed to me his whole estate, which amounted to one hundred pounds.*"

The piety and integrity of Benezet's character, were such as to excite in the mind of every one who had the knowledge of him, the greatest respect; whilst the innocent and unreserved affability of his manners, rendered his association with all classes of society, acceptable and agreeable. As the objects which engaged his attention were of a public nature, he had frequent interviews with individuals of distinction in the government, whose influence he wished should be exerted for the advancement of his benevolent

purposes. By such he was uniformly heard with marked attention, and from them he received many amiable proofs of regard.

Soon after the arrival of the count de Luzerne at Philadelphia, in the character of ambassador from the court of Louis XVI. Anthony Benezet, anxious to interest his feelings on the subject of the slave trade, made a visit to the minister, and that occasion laid the foundation of a cordial and mutual attachment.

As long as the count remained in the United States, a most friendly intercourse was maintained between them; and when he was about to embark for France, a day being assigned for taking leave, Benezet conceived it respectful to wait upon him. On his arrival at his residence, he found the minister surrounded by numerous guests, who were bestowing compliments and good wishes upon him. Benezet retired, unobserved, to a corner of the room, until some of the visiters had departed; and when an opportunity was furnished, he presented himself before him, and said: "*Thou knowest I cannot use the compliments which the company have expressed;*

but I wish thee the favour of Heaven, and a safe return to thy country." Upon which the count exclaimed: "*O! Mr. Benezet, you have exceeded them all;*" at the same moment embracing and kissing him.

Anthony Benezet was remarkable for his kind and condescending manner toward persons much younger than himself; especially if he perceived in their character any promise of usefulness. He was often heard to say in scriptural phrase: "*Wisdom is grey hairs, and an unspotted life old age.*" From this trait of a really great mind, might be expected to proceed every amiable and encouraging effort, to render the talents and dispositions of those, with whom he met, subservient to the greatest possible benefit to his fellow creatures. Hence it was, that he always sought for, and seldom failed to make himself acquainted with some feature of the character, or use some information acquired by mingling among men, which he directed to a salutary purpose.

An interesting proof of this humble though exalted disposition in Anthony Benezet, is illus-

trated in the notice he took of the late pious and excellent Jacob Lindley, when he was a youth. Lindley, to adopt his own designation of himself, was a "*stripling*" when he attended a yearly meeting of Friends held at Philadelphia. His mind had been, for some time, much afflicted with an observation of the pernicious effects of spirituous liquors; and he was anxious that the religious society to which he belonged, might cease to use, and prevent any of its members from being instrumental in manufacturing or vending them. He therefore rose and developed his feelings to the assembly, in the energetic and pathetic manner for which he was peculiarly remarkable.

When the meeting adjourned, he observed a stranger pressing through the crowd towards him, which having effected, he took him by the hand in the most affectionate manner, and said: "*My dear young friend, I was very glad to hear thy voice on the subject of spirituous liquors. I had much unity with thy concern, and hope that no discouragement may have been received from its not being further noticed; and now I want thee to go home and take dinner with me, having something further to say to thee on the subject.*"

Lindley accepted the invitation; and after they had dined, Benezet introduced his young guest into a little room used as a study, where he produced a manuscript work on the subject of spirituous liquors, in an unfinished state. He opened the book and laid it on a table before them, saying: "*This is a treatise which I have been for some time engaged in writing, on the subject of thy concern in meeting to day; and now if thou hast a mind to sit down, and write a paragraph or two, I will embody it in the work, and have it published.*"

The same disinterested goodness, which induced him to respect and cherish whatever he saw valuable in the character of his young friends, led him also, to disapprove those practices which he observed any of them in the indulgence of, as tending to render such less useful than they might otherwise be, and their example injurious to others. But whether exciting to good works, or reproving for what he conceived to be improprieties, the time and manner were always wisely adapted to the purpose. Having no dogma of his own formation to establish, nor any selfish feeling to gratify, the means which he employed for promoting the welfare of others,

were uniformly such as the Author of Christianity had ordained, for accomplishing the great end of the religion of love.

It would be impossible to furnish a more striking example of the delicate and forcible manner adopted by him, in the expression of rebuke, than that which occurred at the house of one of his female acquaintance, sometime after her marriage. He had called on a benevolent occasion; and though his young friend was *in full dress for a ball,* he was admitted. When he beheld her gala attire, he drew himself into an attitude of surprise; and, with regret marked in his unsophisticated countenance, he exclaimed plaintively: "*My dear S——, I should not have recognized my amiable pupil, but that thy well known features and excellent qualities, are not to be hidden by so grotesque and lamentable a disguise. Thy kind and compliant temper has yielded, at some expense to thy heart, to the opinions of others; and I love thee for the motive, though I cannot admire the evidence of it.*"

The subsequent letters will also establish this predominent disposition of his mind; the females

to whom they were addressed, were, at the date of them, in the morning of life.

"To E. G.

"The perusal of the inclosed serious reflections in the mournful situation of things amongst us, will, I trust, afford thee satisfaction, and I should rejoice if they might have any tendency to strengthen those good inclinations, which I am persuaded thy own good sense, as well as religious views will suggest, of the impropriety of thy giving any countenance to the vain and corrupting dissipations, which are proposed to be soon entered upon in this city, in which thou wilt doubtless be pressingly invited to join. My near affection, and long connection with thy dear father, and my earnest desire for thy true welfare, will, I trust, make an apology for this freedom unnecessary.

"From the same principles I cannot but much desire, that thou wouldest let us have thy company at our religious meetings, as I suppose our mode of worship is most agreeable to thy judgment. It would certainly furnish thee with an opportu-

nity of gaining such religious strength, as might the better enable thee to encounter the violent attacks from the spirit of the world, which thy situation will otherwise expose thee to. I know it is common for us frail mortals, to plead a necessity of complying with many things, in contradiction to our better informed religious judgment, and conclude we shall keep within certain limited bounds. But alas! weakness is ours. It is not in our power to stem the torrent, when once embarked on a stream.

"The Almighty will not accept of a divided heart. If, as the scripture says, 'the righteous scarcely are saved,' how can we expect Divine assistance, if we do not through watching and prayer, exercise the whole power we are favoured with?

"Let us, dear B. by a generous effort of that reason, enlightened by grace, which I am persuaded thou hast been favoured with, break through the tinsel scene of vanity and folly that surrounds us. Let the wise man's advice be most weighty with us; to remember our latter end: and in every thing act with reference to that aw-

ful period. Let us view things as they will appear to us on a bed of languishment, when, as we then cannot afford this world's votaries any farther profit or pleasure, so they will quite forsake us, and we shall be left to our own pungent reflections, and the converse of superior beings, administering comfort, or the contrary.

"At such a time, with how much more satisfaction shall we have to reflect upon the time we have spent in seeking after God, in worship or otherwise, than in those light and frothy conversations, those scenes of corrupting dissipation, which so much engross the minds, and time of the worldly.

"With near affection, I remain,

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

"To S. N.

"My dear ———, I have of late been much engaged in thought; and indeed what serious mind can refrain from mournful reflections, when we consider on the one hand, the purity of our profession, and, on the other, have to observe the

general behaviour and appearance of our young women, and the insensibility they manifest when treated with on these important subjects! I trust, my dear friend, from the apprehension I have of thy sensibility, and kind disposition, I may mention my thoughts on this most interesting subject, with expectation of tender sympathy from thee; rather than danger of giving thee any offence.

"I have remembered the apostle's injunction, 'that Christian women ought to be arrayed in *modest* apparel, *not costly*, but with *sobriety* and shamefacedness.' I have also had to think of the nature of the gospel, the conduct, dress, food, &c. of him who was greater than any of the prophets, even John, the forerunner of Christ. I have remembered the birth and situation of our blessed Saviour himself, his submitting to the most humbling appearance, even to be laid in a manger; and when grown up, declaring his coming was in the form of a servant, not to be ministered unto, but to minister: 'Behold,' says he, 'I am amongst you as one that serveth;' '*leaving us*' an example,' saith the apostle, 'that we should follow his footsteps.'

"But how different from the example of our Lord, are the conduct and views, of the greatest part of our young people; notwithstanding it is indispensably necessary, that such as are desirous to follow Christ in the regeneration, should behave in their clothing, &c. in such a manner, as will best enable them to answer the sober ends of an *industrious, frugal* life; a life of *affection* and *care,* not only in their own families, but as sisters and friends; as nurses spiritually and temporally, to many who may suffer for want of their assistance. Doctor Cave, in his account of the first christians, tells us, 'they were exceedingly careful to avoid all such things as savoured of costliness and finery, choosing such as expressed the greatest lowliness and innocency.' And that our ancient Friends understood the apostle's advice in its full extent, appears beyond all dispute, from what William Penn says in his reflections and maxims, *viz.* 'If thou art clean and warm, it is sufficient; for more does but rob the poor, and please the wanton."

"If every expence which might be spared, is vainly wasting that which properly belongs to the poor, and every conformity to vain and foolish

fashions, is to please, and indeed often meant to allure the wanton; what can be said in defence of the appearance of so many of our young women? so contrary to that humble, self-denying state of service, which as followers of Christ, is required of them; choosing to appear as mistresses, as ladies, delighting themselves like the false church, in sitting as queens to be looked at and admired, rather than capacitated to fulfil the sober ends of life, in the service we owe one to another.

"From a sense of the prevalency of these evils, how can the sincere lovers of truth but mourn; deeply mourn evan over many of those who esteem themselves, and are esteemed, as *moderate*, comparatively with others! the softness and delicacy of their clothing, more adapted to pagan king's palaces than Christian pilgrim's cottages; the putting on of their apparel too manifestly calculated to allure the wanton. To these things may be added, that practice formerly used, and now come again into fashion, of causing their clothes, even their rich silks, &c. to trail on the ground; which thou mayest remember, was a matter of so great concern to our dear friend

Daniel Stanton; an evil which appears to me to be of a very deep dye, as it is not a sudden start of passion in the vain mind, but a *deliberate act*, which requires time and consideration. Hence it may be truly termed, (though I believe not considered as such, by many in the practice,) an act of open rebellion to every impression of grace, as well as an act of ingratitude to HIM, who permits them to use and enjoy the most delicate and nice apparel.

"I have been sorrowful to observe so many manifest such ingratitude, as to throw off *all consideration of delicacy and neatness*, and only because it is the fashion: because the God of this world, the prince of the power of the air, who rules in the children of disobedience, calls to follow his fashions, they should conform to that which is in itself so odious, so destructive, so contrary to every sense of reason and neatness. What shall I call it? indeed it is in itself more expressive of that folly and corruption, in which the human heart is capable of running, than words can set forth. If our dear young women would take these things into serious consideration, it may prevent that which, in a solemn time, may give them inexpressible pain.

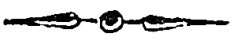
I remember the case of a young woman, with whom I had repeatedly treated on these subjects, but to no purpose; when in a consumption, and near her end, I was desired to visit her, and was informed, that she wanted the company of serious people, and had requested her mother not to admit those who indulged themselves in the fashionable dress of the times: being assured that those who appeared thus could not afford her the comfort she wanted. This will certainly be, more or less, the case with every individual at such a trying hour, except sunk into stupidity, or seared into hardness of heart.

"Sentiments of this kind, I earnestly wish may be enforced upon our young women; that they may consider the nature and design of the Christian religion; the high profession we make; that the eyes of thoughtful people are upon us; that they mark and despise us for our inconsistency; and, above all, what a blessing, and matter of joy it will be to the well disposed youth, in a future day, to reflect, that they have to the utmost of their power, by their conduct, held up the hands of their parents and friends, in strengthening the little good that remains amongst us.

"Do not think I say too much on the subject; for indeed it is a matter of the greatest weight, and ought to be laid open in its fullest light; in which I am encouraged from a hope that the sensible youth will so far see its reasonableness and necessity, as to become advocates on behalf of the cause of truth.

"With near affection, dear ———, I wish ever to remain thy real friend,

"ANTHONY BENEZET."



He ardently inculcated his belief, in the great responsibility attached to the possession of wealth; and from those who were blessed with ability to do good, to the poor and friendless, he implored the most liberal dispensation of money for their relief. His appeals on this account were often availing. He frequently obtained large donations for charitable purposes from those, who were greatly indebted to his efforts, for the enjoyment of the "*luxury of doing good.*" So judicious was he in the distribution of pecuniary assistance, that without any suggestion by him, his friend, the late John Rey-

nel of Philadelphia, made him his almoner, and, in that capacity, Benezet had the satisfaction for many years, to dispose of a large part of the income of that benevolent man, thus nobly devoted to the comfort of his afflicted fellow creatures.

When he observed a covetous disposition, in those who were abounding in riches, he was more severe in the expression of disapprobation, than respecting almost any other error, in the circle of human frailty. He considered a penurious mind as scarcely rational, and aware of his liability to censure with severity those who indulged that degrading propensity, he often checked himself when about to give loose to his feelings in relation to it, having been frequently heard to say, that "*The highest act of charity in the world, was to bear with the unreasonableness of mankind.*"

An acquaintance of his, relating to him in conversation, that he had recently heard of a person in whose coffers after his death, many thousand dollars in specie were found, Benezet expressed great sorrow at being informed of

the circumstance, and begged of his friend to give as little currency as possible to the fact, adding, that he thought, "*It would have been quite as reasonable to have had as many thousand pairs of boots or shoes in the house, whilst the poor were suffering with bare feet for the want of them.*"

He deeply lamented the consequences which he saw were produced by the *love of money*; tracing to that cause many of the unhappy turmoils which often laid waste the harmony of families, and which was not unfrequently the foundation of sanguinary conflicts between nations. When he has been made acquainted with the existence of disputes between individuals on account of pecuniary matters, he has been known to negociate with them, by persuading one to accept less than his demand, and the other to allow more than he at first conceived right; and, having thus brought them to the nearest point of reconciliation, he has *paid the difference out of his own pocket, and restored the parties to peace and intercourse, without suffering either of them to know, it was purchased at the expence of his purse.*

In a letter which he wrote a little before his decease, to John Pemberton, who was then in England, he introduces his sentiments on the useless accumulation of wealth in these terms.

"*Philadelphia, 29th of Fifth Month*, 1784.

"It is amazing what an influence the love of the world, its esteem and friendship, and the desire of amassing wealth, living themselves and children in delicacy and show, in conformity to the world, have upon many in our society, who, in other respects, appear under some impressions of good; notwithstanding they cannot but be sensible of its woful effects upon the religious welfare of their offspring, who hereby, as mentioned by the apostle, fall into snares and hurtful lusts, often to their perdition; notwithstanding the nature of our profession, and a conformity to the example and precepts of our Lord, lay such an absolute prohibition on such a state.

"'Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon earth,' says our blessed Saviour: 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter,' &c. 'Wo unto you that are rich.' Be not conformed, but be ye transformed, that ye may be the better qualified

to follow Him who has called you, in the way of the cross, to be soldiers in his holy warfare. Learn of Him who was meek and low; who, though he was Lord of all, chose to come in the form of a servant, walked on foot, fed on barley loaves, &c.

"Some injunctions, less likely to affect the heart, we take according to the full force of the expressions, as with respect to taking oaths, &c.; whilst others, whose hurtful nature is more apparent, and as positively prohibited by our Saviour, as that of laying up treasures, we make nothing of."

"An instance, which not long since occurred, caused me to make some painful reflections upon this most weighty subject, which I find my mind inclined to communicate to thee, my dear friend; perhaps thou mayest make a profitable use of it, in some places where thy lot may be cast.

"A friend died, reputed to have left sixty or seven thousand pounds to a number of children and grandchildren, already so elevated by the fortunes they were possessed of, as to be ready to take wing and fly above truth, in conformity to the world, its friendships, fashions, &c.

"This happened in the depth of winter, one of those intense cold days which we all have felt to be very trying, even to those who are best provided with fuel, suitable clothing, &c. As I passed along, I observed aged people and others tottering about the streets, or standing in the cold in pursuit of a few pence, towards a scanty subsistence; many of these, doubtless, poorly provided with fuel or bedding; both of which articles were then exceedingly scarce and dear.

"I compared the situation and necessity of these aged people, with the superfluous wealth and delicate living of the children of the rich man lately deceased; and could not but be astonished at the selfishness and caprice of the human heart. I queried with myself: Are both these children of the same Father, equally under his notice? Are they enjoined, and do they profess to love each other, as they love themselves? Why is not at least three quarters of this wealth, and three quarters of the wealth of a number of other rich Quakers, laid out in procuring a place of refuge and comfort, and moderate provision, for such weak and aged people, that they may, in the decline of life, be put in the most suitable situa-

tion, to think and prepare for their latter end, and enjoy a moderate state of comfort.

"Is it honest to God or man? Is it doing justice as stewards of the wealth committed to our care? Is it loving our neighbours as ourselves? If mankind are indeed brethren, can it be agreeable to the good Father of the family, that one should engross so much, and employ it to feed the corruptions of his offspring; whilst others are under such manifest disadvantages for want of help!"

Though "*full of good works, and alms deeds,*" which yielded him the gratitude of thousands; though respected for his integrity even by those whose conduct he opposed; honoured at home and abroad for the purity of his motives; admired for his expanded views of the principles of eternal justice and right, which he unceasingly advocated; and beloved and caressed by his personal friends; circumstances combining to elevate the mind, so that few men could have resisted, yet the subject of this memoir was favoured continually to be clothed with the armour of humility; and, protected by it, none of those things exalted his depending spirit. His opinion of himself is truly exhibited in the following extract from a letter to one of his friends.

"*Philadelphia, Seventh Month, 16th*, 1774.

"I herewith send John Woolman's Journal, and that part of his work published in England. Thy aunt showed us a written testimony sent from England, which I applied to her for, but she tells my wife, that thou hast a copy of it. I know of nothing else I can furnish, which would help the designed testimony. O! that I may have reason to believe, that my name is written in the meanest page, (if there is any difference,) of the book of life; and I care nothing about testimonies. I beg thou wilt spare complimenting me about the importance of my engagements. Thou amongst others of my fellow men art welcome, nay hast a right, to my poor service. I indeed desire not to be my own; but I am much out of humour with most of what I have been long doing, as well as with myself. I am rather fearful, much of my activity has been *nothing*, indeed less than *nothing*. O! that a true *gospel nothingness* may prevail in my heart, is my most sincere desire."

In a postscript to another letter, he thus expresses himself, "I desire to verify in myself in

all cases, the doctrine of one of the copies I use in my school:

"Just be thy thoughts, and all thy words sincere;
And know no wish, but what the world may hear."

The person of Anthony Benezet was small; his countenance was composed of strong and interesting features; and though his face beamed with benignant animation, it was far from being handsome. Of this he was himself sensible; for a friend of his once suggesting a desire to possess his portrait, he did not assign the conscientious objection which he probably entertained on the subject; but thus replied to the request: "*O! no, no, my ugly face shall not go down to posterity.*"

His understanding was naturally good; and from books, and an extensive intercourse with mankind, he had acquired a valuable stock of information. He devoted some attention to medical inquiries, in the prosecution of which, after he had passed the meridian of his days, he attended a course of lectures on anatomy. His mind manifested an unusual degree of innocence;

and, though guileless himself, he could quickly penetrate the disguises with which others endeavoured to veil their follies, or their vices.

He was religious without gloom, and cheerful without levity. And whilst he ardently pursued the path, in which he believed duty to God conducted him, neither the rigour of bigotry, nor the littleness of ostentation, had any place in his well regulated mind. He was remarkably active in his movements, having much of the vivacity of manner peculiar to his countrymen. He did not indulge himself with any superfluity in dress; his clothing being made in the most simple manner, and of some material* selected on account of the durability of its texture.

His habitation† and patriarchal manner of living, bore testimony to the consistency of his

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* Cotton velvet.

† One of the first brick dwellings erected in Philadelphia, situate on the north side of Chesnut, between Third and Fourth Streets. It remains a venerable specimen of primitive architecture.

practice with his profession. But humble as they were, his dwelling was the resort of some of the worthiest characters of the country, and his hospitable table has been spread for their entertainment; whilst few foreigners of distinction who came to Philadelphia, left it without visiting him.

He was never idle: perhaps no man more faithfully occupied his time; and few, if any, to so good a purpose. Even at an advanced period of life he denied himself what he conceived to be the needless portion of time commonly allotted to rest, having been heard to say: "*He could not reconcile a habit of such slothful indulgence, with the activity of Christian fervour.*"

When engaged in the composition of his books, it was his practice to devote several hours before the dawn of day to writing; and the occasional relaxation of his mind being indispensable, he sought retirement and bodily exercise in the cultivation of a vegetable garden. He had a faculty which seems nearly allied to what is termed "association of ideas." This was peculiarly evidenced in geography. He possessed so inti-

mate a knowledge of that branch of science, that when any particular latitude and longitude were mentioned, his mind by a comparison and collation of relative facts, instantly presented a correct image of the spot on the globe.

The equanimity and sprightliness of his disposition were such, that he could even derive satisfaction, from sources which would have produced melancholy or discontent, in the mind of almost any one but himself. Having formed an opinion that the great temperance for which he was remarkable, would contribute among other advantages, to prolong the vigour of his memory, he on one occasion, in conversation with a friend, enforced the idea with considerable zeal. This happy consequence did not, however, result from his abstemious habit of living; for several years after, when at the age of seventy, he told the same gentleman, that the faculty of recollection had become much impaired, assuring him at the same time, "that its failure enabled him then to read, with great satisfaction and pleasure, those books he had perused in younger life, the impression of which had been dissipated by the lapse of time."

He often indulged an inherent facetiousness of mind, though the sallies of his wit were always controlled by the predominance of good will, and intended to convey lessons of instruction. Seeing one of his friends in the street, who was remarkable for a hurrying habit he had acquired, " Benezet called to him to stop : " *I am now in haste,*" said the gentleman, " *and will speak with you, when we next see each other;*" but, resolved on his purpose, he retained him an instant, with this impressive question : " *Dost thou think thou wilt ever find time to die?*" They then parted; and the person who received this laconic interrogation, was afterwards heard to say, that " *he felt infinitely indebted to Mr. Benezet for his kind admonition.*"

The sympathies of his nature extended to every thing that was susceptible of feeling, in so much that he avoided the use of animal food during several of the last years of his life; indeed so exquisitely delicate was his sensibility in this respect, that the sight of blood would immediately produce swooning.

A surgeon who had been humanely employed in dressing the wounds of some American sol-

diers, during the revolutionary war, was giving him an account of the nature of the injuries they had received, and of the sufferings they underwent; he listened for a while to the affecting story, but unable any longer to bear the recital, he laid his hand upon his friend, and said: "*Stop, or I shall faint.*"

Being once on business at the house of an acquaintance, he was detained until the dinner was served, of which he was invited to partake; but observing one of the dishes on the table to be poultry, he pleasantly answered: "*What, would you have me eat my neighbours?*" and bidding the family farewell, departed.

His kindness and charity towards objects of distress were intuitive. One of his friends related having seen *him take off his coat in the street, and give it to an almost naked mendicant, and go home in his shirt sleeves for another garment.*

Another instance, illustrative of this prompt benevolence may be cited; whilst it affords an additional proof of the efficacy of his humane appeals to those in high worldly rank; even when

the mode of his application seemed calculated by its singularity, to render his efforts abortive.

During the American war, when the British army occupied Philadelphia, Benezet was assiduous in affording relief to many of the inhabitants, whom the state of things, at that distressing period, had reduced to great privation. Accidentally observing a female, whose countenance indicated calamity, he immediately inquired into her circumstances. She informed him that she was a washerwoman, and had a family of small children dependant on her exertions for subsistence; that she had formerly supported them by her industry, but then having six Hessians quartered at her house, it was impossible, from the disturbance they made, to attend to her business, and she and her children must speedily be reduced to extreme poverty.

Having listened to her simple and affecting relation, Benezet determined to meliorate her situation. He accordingly repaired to the general's quarters; intent on his final object, he omitted to obtain a pass, essential to an uninterrupted access to the officer; and entering the

house without ceremony, he was stopt by the sentinel, who, after some conversation, sent word to the general, "*that a queer looking fellow insisted upon seeing him.*"

He was soon ordered up. Benezet, on going into the room, inquired which was the chief, and taking a chair, seated himself beside the general. Such a breach of etiquette surprised the company present, and induced a German officer to exclaim, in his vernacular tongue: "*What does the fellow mean?*" Benezet, however, proceeded, in French, to relate to the general the cause of his visit, and painted the situation of the poor woman in such vivid colours, as speedily to accomplish the purpose of his humane interference. After thanking the commander for the ready acquiescence to his request, he was about taking his departure, when the general expressed a desire to cultivate a further acquaintance, requesting him to call whenever it might be convenient; at the same time giving orders, that Benezet in future should be admitted without ceremony.

From about the age of thirty, the constitution of Anthony Benezet became firm, enabling him

to endure great exposure and fatigue with the uninterrupted enjoyment of good health, until within a short time previously to his lamented death; an event, which it is supposed, was accelerated by his adoption of vegetable diet, at a period when the gradual decay of his physical energy, required a plan more liberal and nourishing. But though he was for many months evidently declining, he continued to pursue his career of goodness without any abatement of zeal, submitting only to the influence of his disease, by confinement at home, for about ten days before his valuable labours terminated on earth.

As soon as it became known that he was ill, an extensive and deep interest was excited in Philadelphia. His friends and fellow citizens, anxious to learn what was his real situation, were seen crowding about his dwelling, making affectionate inquiry concerning him, and expressing the ardent solicitude which they felt, that he might be restored to his accustomed usefulness in the world.

When, however, they were assured that his recovery was hopeless, the desire of many per-

sons to see him was such, as to induce an indulgence of their wish. They seemed to want his dying benediction extended to them. They were admitted. The chamber in which he lay, and the passage that led to it, were filled with approaching and retiring mourners. He kindly received these visits of respect and love. His last hours, like his long and excellent life, were full of the most important instruction. At that awful crisis, when the character displays no false glare, and all fictitious supports sink into nothing, he taught what he had always inculcated, *that humanity had nothing to boast of; that the efforts of man, could shed no unfading glory on himself.*

He had not much to communicate; and the few expressions which escaped his lips, were such, as could only have proceeded from a mind abased by a sense of its own unworthiness, and reverently depending on the mercy of *Heaven!* At one time he said: "*I am dying, and feel ashamed to meet the face of my Maker, I have done so little in his cause.*" He was heard also to utter: "*Alack! alack! we are poor creatures; I can take no merit for any thing I have done;*

there is mostly something underneath that is selfish, which will not bear sifting."

At another time he said, "*I could wish to live a little longer, that I might bring down self.*"

On the day preceding his death, he took an affectionate farewell of his wife, who was then in an infirm state of health. Their final separation on earth, must have been soothed by the reflection which enabled him to address her thus, for the last time: "*We have lived long, in love and peace.*" They had no offspring to witness this touching scene, on whom his mantle might fall; who could aspire to imitate his example, and inherit his unblemished fame.

His bodily suffering toward the close, was great, but he endured the pangs of expiring nature with fortitude and patience. He contemplated with christian calmness, the moment which would terminate his connexion with mortality; and when the mysterious union between mind and matter was dissolved, his redeemed spirit entered, no doubt, into the everlasting habitation of the righteous!

He died on the third day of the Fifth Month, (May,) Anno Domini, 1784, aged seventy-one years.

When it was announced that death had numbered him among his victims, the expression of regret was universal. It was a day of sorrow. The afflicted widow, the unprotected orphan, and the poor of all descriptions, had lost the sympathetic mind of Benezet. Society lamented the extinguishment of the brilliant light of his philanthropy: the friendless tribes who wandered in the American wilderness, and the oppressed Africans, were indeed bereft; for his willing pen and tongue had ceased for ever to portray the history of their injuries, or to plead for the establishment of their rights, before the sons of men.

At the interment of his remains, in Friends' burial ground, which took place two days after his death, the greatest concourse of people that had ever been witnessed on such an occasion in Philadelphia, was present; being a collection of all ranks and professions among the inhabitants; thus manifesting the universal esteem in which he was held. Among others who paid that last

tribute of respect, were many hundred black people, testifying by their attendance, and by their tears, the grateful sense they entertained of his pious efforts in their behalf.

His will, in his own hand writing, executed on the fourth day of the Third Month, 1784, bequeaths his estate to his wife during her natural life, and, at her death, directs the payment of several legacies to poor and obscure persons, in sums of from two to five pounds. The residue, he devises in trust to the overseers of the public school, "*To hire and employ a religious minded person or persons, to teach a number of negro, mulatto or Indian children, to read, write, arithmetic, plain accounts, needle work, &c. and it is my particular desire, founded on the experience I have had in that service, that in the choice of such tutor, special care may be had to prefer an industrious, careful person, of true piety, who may be or become suitably qualified, who would undertake the service from a principle of charity, to one more highly learned not equally disposed.*"

In a codicil to that instrument, executed three

days previously to his demise, he directs his books to be given to " the library of Friends, in Philadelphia." They amounted to nearly two hundred volumes, principally on religious and medical subjects. He also bequeathed to the " Pennsylvania society for promoting the abolition of slavery, &c." the sum of fifty pounds.

Such were the services, and thus was terminated the life of Anthony Benezet. The emotions that crowd upon the mind, when contemplating the assemblage of estimable qualities which were displayed in his character, are of no ordinary nature. With feelings tending to enthusiastic eulogy, his biographer pauses in the recollection of a fact, communicated by one of the most intimate surviving friends of this amiable and excellent man. He disapproved of the often over-rated testimonies which were recorded of the dead, and requested the venerable gentleman alluded to, to use his exertions if he should survive him, to prevent any posthumous memorial concerning him, should his friends manifest a disposition to offer such a tribute of affection to his memory; thus adding to the

injunction: "*But if they will not regard my desire, they may say:*

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AND,

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WAS

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